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Consumer preferences in the home detergents market and factors
that determine them

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ΣΧΟΛΗ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ
MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

Οι προτιμήσεις των καταναλωτών στην αγορά των οικιακών
απορρυπαντικών και οι παράγοντες που τις επηρεάζουν

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“Στην οικογένεια μου για την αμέριστη συμπαράστασή τους”

Abstract

The purchase of detergents is a special and demanding market as consumers, in addition to the usual factors (eg price, quality, etc.) may also be influenced by other factors (eg environmental concerns). In Greece, the detergent sector is particularly important and characterized by great competition. The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the factors that influence consumer preferences when purchasing detergents. An additional secondary objective was to investigate potential differences in consumer demographic characteristics. For this purpose, a quantitative survey was carried out by distributing an electronic questionnaire. A total of 40 consumers participated in the survey. The findings showed that the most important factors influencing consumer preferences when purchasing detergents are environmental concerns and offers. Also, important factors are product quality, product display, social influence and chemophobia. The findings showed significant differences in terms of gender (women are more influenced by quality, environmental concerns and chemophobia compared to men), marital status (married are more influenced by trust compared to single) and monthly income (consumers with a monthly income of up to 1000 euros influenced more by chemophobia, consumers with a monthly income of 2001+ euros influenced more by trust).

Keywords Purchase behavior, consumer preferences, detergents

Περίληψη

Η αγορά απορρυπαντικών είναι μια ιδιαίτερη και απαιτητική αγορά καθώς οι καταναλωτές, εκτός από τους συνήθεις παράγοντες (π.χ. τιμή, ποιότητα κ.λπ.) ενδέχεται να επηρεάζονται και από άλλους παράγοντες (π.χ. περιβαλλοντικές ανησυχίες). Στην Ελλάδα, ο κλάδος των απορρυπαντικών είναι ιδιαίτερα σημαντικός και χαρακτηρίζεται από μεγάλο ανταγωνισμό. Σκοπός της παρούσας διπλωματικής εργασίας ήταν να διερευνήσει τους παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν τις προτιμήσεις των καταναλωτών κατά την αγορά απορρυπαντικών. Ένας επιπλέον δευτερεύων στόχος ήταν η διερεύνηση πιθανών διαφορών στα δημογραφικά χαρακτηριστικά των καταναλωτών. Για το σκοπό αυτό, πραγματοποιήθηκε ποσοτική έρευνα με τη διανομή ηλεκτρονικού ερωτηματολογίου. Στην έρευνα συμμετείχαν συνολικά 40 καταναλωτές. Τα ευρήματα έδειξαν ότι οι πιο σημαντικοί παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν τις προτιμήσεις των καταναλωτών κατά την αγορά απορρυπαντικών είναι οι περιβαλλοντικές ανησυχίες και προσφορές. Επίσης, σημαντικοί παράγοντες είναι η ποιότητα του προϊόντος, η προβολή του προϊόντος, η κοινωνική επιρροή και η χημειοφοβία. Τα ευρήματα έδειξαν σημαντικές διαφορές ως προς το φύλο (οι γυναίκες επηρεάζονται περισσότερο από την ποιότητα, τις περιβαλλοντικές ανησυχίες και τη χημειοφοβία σε σύγκριση με τους άνδρες), την οικογενειακή κατάσταση (οι έγγαμοι επηρεάζονται περισσότερο από την εμπιστοσύνη σε σύγκριση με τους ελεύθερους) και το μηνιαίο εισόδημα (καταναλωτές με μηνιαίο εισόδημα υψηλότερο στα 1000 ευρώ επηρεάζονται περισσότερο από τη χημειοφοβία, οι καταναλωτές με μηνιαίο εισόδημα 2001+ ευρώ επηρεάζονται περισσότερο από την εμπιστοσύνη).

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά Consumer behavior, household detergents, influencing factors

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1. Introduction

Consumer behavior is distinguished in various forms, which are directly related to the way the consumer makes use of the products and services he buys. Consumer behavior is also distinguished according to how much the consumer is involved in differentiating the service or product. The level of involvement of the consumer is directly related to his previous consumption experiences, to his interests, to the purchasing conditions and to the social context of his activity (Mandel et al., 2016). As Kotler (1991) mentions, consumer behavior can be complex when consumers are significantly involved in the market and have knowledge about the differences in the products or services they consume. This complex consumer behavior occurs when the consumer has to spend large sums of money to buy a product or service, when he does not make very frequent purchases for a particular product, when his purchase may hide some danger or his character is revealed consumer.

The detergent industry consists of a number of large companies that have a variety of products and, on the other hand, several smaller companies that usually deal with a specific category. Several companies in the sector, in addition to the examined products, usually produce or import cosmetics, chemical products, stationery or even detergents for other uses outside of the home (Kogawa et al., 2017). One of the main characteristics of the detergent industry is the intense competition that develops between companies, as well as the high degree of concentration that the market in question exhibits. Most of the total domestic market is covered by a few large companies, even though there are a relatively large number of companies operating in this industry. A dominant position among the largest companies in the sector is occupied by the subsidiaries of multinational companies, which operate based on the standards set by their parent companies and procure part or all of their products from them (Steiner, 2013). Nowadays, the effects of the global financial crisis are unpleasant for the entire spectrum of society. The consumer is asked to choose the purchase of those products and services that will bring maximum satisfaction according to his limited purchasing power, due to the reduction of income (Peighambari et al., 2016).

The detergent market in Greece is one of the most competitive, dynamic and open because there is a wide range of products (at least 25) behind multinational, Greek companies, discount chains, private label products. At the same time, these products are offered in every price range. Most of the total domestic market is covered by a few large-sized companies (Procter & Gamble, Elias Unilever and Henkel). Intense competition is developing between the big companies, with the aim of conquering an ever larger market share. For this reason, companies producing detergents constantly seek to enrich the offer with new products, seeking on the one hand to diversify, and on the other to meet new requirements. The intensity and frequency of offers to the consumer coming from industry and commerce are among the strongest in Europe. Offers such as price reduction, extra product at the same price, another product as a gift, offers in kind, etc. are a daily practice in the market (Statista, 2023). It should even be noted that the practice of offers in this category is particularly intense as detergents are a basic item for the household and therefore work for the trade as a pole of attraction for the consumer. The Greek consumer is one of the most demanding consumers of detergent products and therefore, Greece is one of the markets with the greatest innovation in these products. In Greece, new products often make their appearance first in Europe (Anastasiadou et al., 2020; Lymperopoulos et al., 2010)

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the preferences of consumers in Greece regarding household detergents and the factors that influence them when purchasing them. The objectives of the thesis are:

1. To highlight those factors that influence consumers in Greece regarding the purchase of household detergents
2. To assess whether the demographic characteristics of consumers significantly differentiate the factors that shape their behavior regarding the purchase of household detergents

1.2 Methodology

In order to answer the objectives of the thesis, it was deemed more appropriate to carry out a quantitative sample survey using an online questionnaire. The purpose of quantitative analysis is to discover the causes of change in social phenomena through

objective measurement and numerical analysis. It aims to verify a hypothesis through numerical data and is used in the scientific and private sphere. Data collection is done with structured protocols such as questionnaires, scales and achievement essays. The purpose of quantitative research is to discover the causes of change in social phenomena, trying to verify (or disprove) a pre-existing hypothesis with the help of numerical data and statistical data analysis. (Saunders et al., 2015). In total, 40 consumers participated in the survey who answered the survey questionnaire anonymously during the period March-May 2024.

2. Literature review

2.1 Consumer behavior

The term "Consumer Behavior" (Consumer Behavior) is used to describe the set of actions on the part of the individual that result in either the purchase and use of a product or service, or its rejection. The study of the individual's behavior as a consumer first appeared in the 1960s, where sales promotion executives focused on investigating consumer needs that contribute to the creation of specific causes of consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. By focusing on the needs of the consumer, the production and promotion of products is now based on the wishes of the consumer public and not on the ideology of sales and the needs of the seller (Siomkos, 2011).

Also according to Jacoby (1976) consumer behavior reflects the set of consumer decisions in relation to the acquisition, consumption and disposal of goods, services, time and ideas by human decision-making units over time. While Blackwell et al. (2001) argued that Consumer Behavior is a multifaceted science that not only investigates the consumer decision-making process and the actual acquisition of the product, but also the further activities of the consumer after purchasing the product, such as use, evaluation and disposal of the product or service.

Consumer behavior is defined as the process and activities, in which consumers participate when they search for, choose, buy, use, and evaluate products and services with the ultimate goal of satisfying their wants and needs. The decision-making process is divided into low and high participation. Low value products require less attention while more expensive products require more involvement and attention (Anisa & Riyanto, 2020).

The study of consumer behavior focuses on the processes that take place during a purchase decision about how to spend their available resources (money, time and effort), which includes both the processes that precede the purchase and the post-purchase behavior of the individual (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). More specifically, according to the stimulus-response model, the consumer receives a series of environmental stimuli that give rise to a need, which he processes and responds to by purchasing a product. These

stimuli may come from the economic, political, social and technological environment of the consumer, while many times he may simultaneously receive the effects of the marketing mix of the company promoting the product (Solomon, 2016).

The decision-making process is central to consumer behavior, yet the way consumers evaluate and select products varies depending on the degree of importance or risk associated with the consumer's decision. The process of making a purchase decision includes: a) recognizing the problem, b) searching for information about a product, c) evaluating alternatives, d) choosing the product, and e) the results of the purchase, i.e. evaluating of the purchase made (Stankevich, 2017). However, some decisions are more important than others that the consumer makes on a more automatic basis and require the search for a variety of information, which he must analyze before choosing the right product. Therefore, the way he will evaluate the information before purchasing a product depends on the effort the consumer will make to collect the appropriate information, i.e. the degree of his mixing with the product, but also on the effects he will receive from his mixture marketing the product itself (Solomon, 2016).

According to this model, the process of making a purchase decision follows a specific process and has as its first step the recognition of a need or a problem. Then the consumer looks for data and information regarding his problem. The sources of information at his disposal are divided into four groups: a) personal sources, such as family, friends, acquaintances and relatives, b) commercial sources, such as advertising, sellers, shop windows, c) public sources such as the mass media, consumer rating organizations and d) empirical sources such as product review and use. During the third stage, the alternative options available to him are evaluated in order to finally decide which product and where to buy it. In the next stage, the fourth, the consumer is asked to make his final decision on the purchase of a product or service, while the fifth and last stage is related to the consumer's behavior after the purchase. The degree of satisfaction received from the purchase and ultimately the consumption of a product is evaluated as well as from the actions that will express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Hansen, 2005).

2.1.1. Types of buying behavior

The purchasing behavior displayed by consumers depending on the product and conditions can be grouped into the following forms of purchasing behavior (Kotler & Armstrong 2010):

Habitual buying behavior: Habitual buying behavior takes place when buying products of daily use and small value. The element of speed distinguishes this behavior, as buyers make quick and thoughtless decisions to purchase the products. Making these decisions relies on spontaneous behavior, emotional choice, or force of habit (Krishna & Shylajan, 2007).

Variety-seeking buying behavior: Variety-seeking buying behavior takes place when buying everyday products but the shopper chooses a different product brand for a change. The element of change is also what distinguishes the behavior in question. If the buyer is satisfied with this change, they will likely stick with the new brand for some time. Otherwise, he will either return to his previous choice or make a new choice (Zhang, 2022).

Dissonance reduction purchasing behavior: Discrepancy reduction buying behavior occurs when the buyer is going to purchase products or services of high value. In this case, the purchasing behavior is distinguished from the due diligence element. The buyer carefully collects information about the product or service he wants to buy, analyzes it carefully, and thinks long enough before proceeding to make a purchase decision. This purchasing behavior aims to reduce the risk related to the financial and non-financial consequences that can be caused by the wrong purchase of a product or a service of great value (McGrath, 2017).

Complex buying behavior: Complex buying behavior occurs when the buyer, before purchasing a product or service, takes into account many parameters. These parameters concern the assessment of the buyer's needs in the present and the future, the assessment of what the product or service can offer him through its characteristics, its quality, its expected lifespan, the assessment of the after-sales services (after sales services) that accompany it, e.g. technical support, as well as the assessment of other

equally important parameters, e.g. supplier reliability. In this case, the buying behavior is distinguished by the element of delay. The buyer delays making his purchase decision so that he collects a lot of information, evaluates it thoroughly and possibly consults people from his environment (Siomkos, 2011).

Buying behavior of dealing with the unknown: The buying behavior of coping with the unknown takes place when the buyer is asked to buy products or services whose characteristics are completely unknown to him. In this case, buying behavior is distinguished by the element of hesitancy. The buyer, in order to overcome this hesitation, collects information through his social circle, through the study of relevant publications, magazines, etc., and through his contact with specialized sellers (Siomkos, 2011).

Also, according to Sayyida et.al (2021) after Covid-19, there are four types of consumer behaviors, depending on purchasing needs. More specifically, there is the consumer where he uses the traditional way of buying by choosing to go to a physical store. On the other hand, there is the consumer where they only buy online. In addition, some consumers choose to gather information from the Internet and then complete the purchase in a physical store and vice versa. This is because they wish to find the cheapest goods as well as to ensure that the quality of the product is excellent (Sayyida et.al, 2021).

2.1.2. Consumers classification

Consumers can be distinguished into categories based on various criteria, a key criterion of which is the speed with which they tend to accept new products or services. Based on this discrimination criterion, the following categories of consumers emerge (Kotler &, Armstrong 2010):

- **Innovators:** Consumers in this category are distinguished by usually good levels of education and have high incomes, belonging to the upper social strata. Their high social status allows them to develop a cosmopolitan and modern culture which leads, often impulsively, to the purchase of the new products and services of the market. As soon as new products and new services begin to penetrate the rest of the consumer categories, innovators stop buying them, looking for new goods. In general, if a new product or service is not purchased by innovators, it is unlikely to be preferred by other consumer categories.

- Early adopters: Consumers in this category are distinguished by good levels of education and income and belong to middle to high social strata. They tend to purchase products and services previously purchased by innovators. Their consumer behavior is distinguished by the element of hesitancy towards new products and services. Therefore they need a push to make such a purchase which they get from the category of modernists.

- Early majority: Consumers in this category are distinguished by medium, or comparatively lower compared to the above categories of consumers, levels of education and income and belong to middle social strata. Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs or middle-level executives are often found in this consumer category. They tend to buy products and services since these goods have already been purchased in the above categories for some time. They follow the buying trends of the two categories above.

- Later majority: Consumers in this category are characterized by low levels of education and income and belong to lower social and income strata. Their income level pushes them to form a conservative consumer behavior. They tend to buy products that are available at very good prices and have been previously purchased, and therefore, tried by a large number of consumers.

- Laggards: Consumers in this category are characterized by very low levels of education and income. The purchases they make aim to satisfy the absolutely necessary, daily needs, e.g. food, clothing, etc.

2.2 The attitude of the consumer

According to Allport (1935) attitude is "a mental or nervous state of readiness organized on the basis of a person's experience and which exerts a guiding or dynamic influence on the person's reaction to all objects or situations with which he is related ». By extension, the consumer's needs influence his attitudes and these, in turn, influence his purchasing decisions. Attitudes are an ongoing and general evaluation of objects, persons,

and stimuli in general, while an attitude object is anything towards which there is an attitude. Katz (1960) developed the functional theory of attitudes to explain how individuals' attitudes facilitate social behavior. Thus, consumers who are expected to face similar situations in the future are likely to begin to form an attitude perspective, with a different function each time. The most basic functions of attitudes are the following (Solomon, 2016):

- The utilitarian function refers to the development of attitudes towards certain objects simply because they provide pleasure or pain. Advertisements emphasizing the simple benefits of the product focus on the utilitarian function of posture
- The value-expressive function refers to the central values of the consumer and the attitude is formed for a product based on what it means to the consumer.
- The defensive function of the Ego (ego-defensive function) refers to the attitudes we form to protect ourselves from internal feelings or external threats. Advertisements that promised to help the man project a more masculine image appealed to his inner feeling of insecurity about his masculinity.
- The knowledge function refers to the attitudes we form because we need order, structure or meaning and is mainly used in an ambiguous situation.

Attitude consists of three different elements: the cognitive, the affective, and the action element. Cognitive refers to the knowledge, beliefs, and opinions a person has about an object. The affective component reflects feelings and evaluations about the attitude to be formed. The last element refers to the individual's tendency to take a specific action in relation to an object, while in the case of a consumer it refers to the purchase intention (Siomkos, 2011).

2.3 Consumer behavior models

According to Jisana (2014) traditional models of consumer behavior are categorized as economic model, learning model, psychoanalytic model and social model.

The economic model, which focuses on the idea that a consumer's purchasing behavior is based on the maximum benefits he can obtain at the minimum possible cost. In this way one could predict consumer behavior based on the purchasing power and price of competing products. For example, he will proceed to purchase a similar product, which is offered at a lower price, maximizing his benefits. The consequent increase in the consumer's purchasing power will result in an increase in the quantity of products he buys (Jisana, 2014).

The learning model, which is based on the idea that consumer behavior is driven by the need to satisfy basic learning needs. Basic needs include food, clothing, shelter, while learning needs include fear and guilt needs. Every consumer has a tendency to buy products that will satisfy their needs and therefore give them satisfaction (Solomon, 2016).

The psychoanalytic model, which takes into account the fact that consumer behavior is influenced by both the conscious and subconscious part of the brain. The three levels of consciousness, discussed by Sigmund Freud (id, ego, and superego), function to influence consumer purchasing decisions and behavior. A hidden symbol in a company's name or logo may have an effect on a person's subconscious, which may influence them to buy that product instead of a similar product from another company (Jisana, 2014)

The social model, which embraces the idea that a consumer's buying pattern is based on their role and influence in society. A consumer's behavior can also be influenced by the people he interacts with and the culture of the society (Jisana, 2014).

More specifically, Jisana (2014) presents four modern models of consumer behavior:

- The Howard-Sheth model (1969).
- The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model (1978).
- The Nicosia model.
- The stimulus-response model

The Sheth (1969) model is one of the most comprehensive models for the study of consumer behavior, while it uses the concept of "stimulus-response" in order to explain consumer choice over a period of time. Its four main components are (Haines et al., 1970):

- i. The input variables refer to the stimuli coming from the environment, according to the characteristics of a product or a brand such as quality, price, discretion, service and availability. The most important stimuli are the elements that make up the brand and refer to price and availability, as they affect the consumer directly through attributes.
- ii. Output variables are the observable responses of the consumer to stimulus inputs. The purchase is the actual and lies in the sequential effect of attention (consumer's overall response to information intake), understanding of the brand and behavior towards the brand.
- iii. The hypotheses, which are classified into two groups which concern representative structures and learning structures. The first category deals with how the individual perceives and responds to the information received from the input variables, which represents the ambiguity of stimuli and perception. The second category concerns the consumer's motivations that lead him to his satisfaction from a purchase situation. Purchase intention is the result of the interplay of consumer motivation, choice criteria, brand understanding, brand attitude, and trust associated with the purchase decision. Motives are general or specific goals that prompt action, influencing the consumer's intention regarding existing alternatives, which result in setting a set of product preferences. The consumer's brand understanding and degree of trust, choice criteria and purchase intentions converge on purchase intention.
- iv. Exogenous variables, which are not defined but are assumed to be constant and can significantly influence consumer decisions. Some exogenous variables included in the model are market importance, personality variables, culture, social class and finally economic status.

The model of Engel - Kollat - Blackwell (1978) is essentially a model for solving problems and understanding consumer behavior. Describes active information seeking and consumer evaluation processes. This model presents evidence about the decision-making process and the relationship of interaction between them. Consumer behavior is considered as the decision-making process, which includes those activities that occur over a period of time and are as follows (Engel, et al., 1990):

1. The recognition of problems or the need for recognition.
2. The search for information.
3. The evaluation of alternatives.
4. The choice.

Nicosia's (1966) model specializes in motivation and consumer behavior. It tries to explain their behavior by creating a connection between the company and the potential consumer. The model suggests that the messages emanating from the company initially influence the consumer's predisposition towards the product or service. Based on the situation that will be formed, the consumer will have a certain attitude towards the product or services. This may result in the consumer searching for the product or evaluating its features. If the above step satisfies him, a positive one can result attitude with the decision to purchase the product, otherwise the reverse may occur. Nicosia's model groups the above explanation of activity into the following areas:

1. Fields that have two sub-fields and consumer properties or business properties.
2. The research and evaluation of the advertised product carried out by the consumer and its verification if there are other alternatives
3. The way the consumer buys the product.

Finally, the "stimulus-response" model states that marketing and other stimuli enter the consumer's "black box" and produce certain responses related to the purchase choice. Entrepreneurs need to understand what is inside the consumer's "black box" and how stimuli are transformed into responses. Marketing stimuli consist of the four elements of the marketing mix which are product, price, positioning and promotion. All these inputs enter the "black box", where they are converted into a series of observations about product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing and market share (Jisana, 2014).

2.4 Factors influencing consumer behavior

The study of consumer behavior is not much different from human behavior in general as researchers should have both knowledge of psychology and knowledge of the effect of the environment on consumers. So, it is understood that the study of consumer behavior is a particularly complex process that affects all aspects of human life (Jain, 2022).

In order to buy a product someone follows a specific process. The process of buying behavior starts from the stimuli received by the consumer, which are the so-called 4Ps (product, price, distribution channels and promotion). In addition, other stimuli such as economic, cultural, political and technological contribute. Based on these stimuli, the consumer is led to recognize a need or a problem. The next stage is that of the purchase decision where the consumer will make the decision to purchase the product or service, in which information is sought. The sources of information are divided into four groups: personal sources (family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances), commercial sources (advertising, salespeople, suppliers, packaging, window displays), public sources (mass media, consumer evaluation organizations) and empirical sources (review, use of the product). The alternatives are then evaluated in order to finally decide what and where to buy. The consumer then makes the final decision to purchase a product or service. The last stage concerns the behavior of the consumer after the purchase. His behavior is related to whether he will be satisfied or not with the purchase of a product or service and the actions that will express his satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (Kotler & Keller, 2011).

Thus, in order to explain the behavior of consumers and the process of making their purchase decision, psychological, sociological, cultural, anthropological factors are investigated, the reactions of consumers towards the stimulus they receive during the process of making the purchase decision, as well as the behavior and their treatment towards the product after the purchase (Baltas & Papastathopoulou, 2013).

The basic model of consumer behavior involves the creation of the relationship between the stimulus and the individual's response to it, regardless of whether the product is detergent or any other type of product. Based on this model, the stimuli received by the

consumer "highlight" the needs he already has. Through the processes that each stimulus creates for him, he decides the product that he will choose to buy (Siomkos, 2011). More specifically, the individual can be influenced by the technological and economic environment, by television, radio and print advertising, and by the various marketing strategies used by businesses, such as, for example, setting price, the promotion and distribution of the product, as well as discounts (Ramya & Ali, 2016). Other factors that influence the purchasing behavior of individuals are: personal such as gender, age, personality and lifestyle of each individual, social such as social groups, social class etc. Finally, characteristics such as the aforementioned price, the brand and the quality of the products, in turn greatly influence the purchase decision process (Cleveland et al., 2011).

Cultural factors: One of the main factors that influence the consumer in terms of what they want to buy is culture. The culture formed by consumers is inextricably linked to the values, beliefs and perceptions learned from family members or the society to which a consumer is exposed as these are fundamental in shaping the individual's behavior. Thus, businesses should take into account the cultural values of each market and the changes that occur from time to time in each country. Overall, culture is broken down into many different subcultures, which influence consumer socialization. Elements of the subcultures of each country and therefore each market are geographic regions, nationalities, religion and racial groups (Kotler & Keller, 2011).

Social factors: Over the years, consumers become much more demanding as they are oriented towards the trends and fashion of society. Thus, they choose products and consumer goods that have not been used for animal testing, companies that are sustainable and environmentally friendly, and businesses that are against child labor. This awareness of the consumers has caused the change in the policies and Marketing strategy of the companies. Furthermore, social classes and the stratification of individuals in society (social status) significantly influence the purchasing decision of the consumer public. A social class is defined as the group of people who have similar beliefs and values, common interests and similar income criteria (Melnyk et al., 2021).

Also, another way of separating social groups, which are consequently also purchasing groups for the Marketing departments of companies, is the distinction of primary and secondary groups (Primary and Secondary groups). Family, friends and the

work environment are characterized as capitals, i.e. the people with whom the potential consumer comes into contact every day and who exert a great influence on him. Secondary groups are defined as other groups that have less influence on the consumer such as various sports teams, religious groups and clubs (Kotler & Keller, 2011).

Personal factors: Personal factors are another category of factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions every day. Among the personal factors are also included certain demographic elements that play a decisive role in a person's daily life. and to lead the person to change their purchasing options. Personal factors are related to the age of the person, to the stage of his life, to the professional situation he is in, to his financial situation, to his lifestyle, to his character and personality and finally to the perception that he has this for himself (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). For example, a teenager and an adult have different consumer needs, a bachelor and a family head have different needs, with or without children (Ye et al., 2019). Accordingly, a person who works in an office has different consumption needs and another person who works in a manual job. The financial situation of the individual significantly affects his consumption behavior. Some of the factors that will be analyzed are:

- **Gender:** gender influences consumer behavior as the needs differ between male and female consumers. The gender factor has both a negative and a positive point of view. More specifically, in terms of the negatives, there still seem to be stereotypes regarding the position of men and women from the past. A corresponding example is that women are the ones who have to deal with the housework and with the feeding of the family members and the man is responsible for the money of the house, while there were also advertisements that exaggerated this fact (Ye et al., 2019). However, due to the evolution of society today these stereotypes have mostly been eliminated and the trend of society shows that both men and women have equal roles in the family such as for example in housework or shopping in the supermarket. On the contrary, from the positive point of view of gender, it seems that the behavior of consumers is shaped according to the category of the products as there are categories that refer only to men and only to women and through this the market is segmented by the marketing executives (Baltas & Papastathopoulou, 2013).

- **Age and stage of life:** it is understandable that at each different age and in each different phase of his life, the consumer has a different purchasing behavior and a different way of dealing with the way he makes decisions. In more detail, younger people, i.e. young children, have the influence of their parents in terms of the products they choose to buy, as at this stage of their lives they are not financially independent (Zniva & Weitzl, 2016). In the later stage of their lives, i.e. during adolescence, it seems that parents exert much less influence on their children in terms of their purchasing behavior. In this phase of life children move towards their independence. Finally, during their adult life, consumers judge with other criteria as different needs are formed and they usually buy products to satisfy the needs of their family (Siomkos, 2011). Consumers' needs, opinions, preferences and living conditions change with age. These changes are reflected in the consumption behavior of individuals. Consumer behavior is therefore linked to the concept of the biological cycle: The type of goods that the person buys at each age stage differs as well as the purchasing process that follows. For example, a teenager buys in a very different way than a middle-aged person. In the first case, impulsive behavior is the likely key feature of buying behavior in contrast to the second case, where pre-purchase preparation is the likely key pre-purchase feature (Zniva & Weitzl, 2016).
- **Occupation and economic situation:** the occupation that each person does is linked to both their educational level and their economic situation, that is, the amount of money they receive as a result of their work (Gasana, 2009). The profession affects the way in which the consumer behaves as depending on the position he holds he also chooses the goods through which he will satisfy his needs. The higher the economic status of the consumer, the greater the ability to cover his needs with luxury products, such as buying fresh fruit and vegetables from organic stores or delicatessens and not from the public market (Shavitt et al., 2016). A person's occupation has a direct impact on the formation of his perceptions, his needs and his living conditions. For example, a hospital doctor and a teacher differ substantially in the stimuli they receive from their work environment, or the amount of free time they have, resulting in different consumption behaviors (Gasana, 2009).

- **Income:** The individual's personal income is a determining factor of his behavior. Personal income refers first of all to gross income which consists of disposable income and discretionary income. Disposable income refers to the person's real income after deducting direct taxes and contributions to social security funds (Spangenberg & Lorek, 2019). The consumer can either save or consume his disposable income, as well as a combination of the two actions. Therefore, an increase in disposable income is associated with an increase in consumption and, conversely, a decrease in disposable income is associated with a decrease in consumption. Discretionary income refers to the income that results if the expenses related to paying taxes and covering necessary expenses are deducted from the available income (Reisch & Zhao, 2017).

- **Internal factors** The consumption behavior of individuals is linked to two main internal factors, Motivation and Perception (Solomon, 2016):
 1. **Motivation:** Related to the concept of motivation. Motivation is defined as a needs or the individual's compulsive desire, for which the individual seeks its satisfaction (Solomon, 2016). Incentives turn into consumer incentives when a need or want is satisfied through the purchase of a product or service. Therefore, Motivation can be considered as the force that pushes the individual and consumer towards a (consumer) behavior that is oriented towards achieving goals, e.g. the purchase of a product that satisfies a need. The basic categories of needs that individuals seek to satisfy are biological needs on the one hand, and psychological needs on the other (Tanrikulu, 2021).
 2. **Perception:** It is connected to the five human senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) as well as other senses (sense of direction, balance, orientation, etc.). These sensations feed the brain with stimuli. The brain, through a processing process, selects specific stimuli and transforms them into perceptions and images. The processing process and selection criteria differ from person to person, are internal processes of the person and cannot be mapped. Therefore, Perception is linked to the concepts of subjectivity, categorization of stimuli, personal choice, personal expectations, as well as previous experience which, based on past experiences, largely guides the evaluation of present stimuli (Siomkos , 2011).

Regarding the personal factors that influence consumer behavior, these are the personality, individual characteristics, values and lifestyle of each person (Kotler & Keller, 2011). A person's personality refers to the special features of his character that differentiate him from other people. In particular, as stated by Kotler and Armstrong (2010), the individual's personality is determined by those psychological factors and traits that direct him to reactions that are logical and stable and consequently may have an influence on his consumer behavior, such as the brand name of a product. Especially in terms of consumers' lifestyles, they seem to choose products which suit their respective life circumstances. For example, consumers who have an intense social life choose to eat in restaurants while those who work many hours a day may resort to the solution of ready meals and snacks, which can be easily obtained even from the large Super market chains.

2.5 Selection criteria for detergents

There is a wide variety of detergents on the market, both imported from other countries and produced in Greece. Each of the products has distinct characteristics and particularities, so as to meet the different needs of each consumer. There are various criteria by which a consumer can choose the detergents to buy (Lympelopoulou et al., 2010). Some of these criteria will be analyzed in more detail below

The brand of the product: the consumer generally chooses certain brands, usually because they consume it for a longer period of time and feel more confident. Detergents are packaged products and are characterized by brands, which usually arise either from the producer they come from or from their country of origin and these characteristics make the brands highly recognized and the products trusted. Each producer or supplier therefore tries to consolidate his "brand", i.e. the fresh fruit he sells so that they come first in the choices of consumers as there is competition within the sector and the products should be distinguished for their characteristics and quality their (Isa et al., 2017). Harsono et al. (2018) also state that when consumers demonstrate a positive attitude towards a brand, then the likelihood of actually purchasing its products/services increases. Conversely, when consumers display a negative attitude toward a brand, the likelihood of purchasing its products/services decreases. According to Casidy and Wymer (2015) the attitude towards the brand together with familiarity (brand familiarity) and its superiority (brand remarkableness) shape its dynamics (brand strength). Brand familiarity refers to the extent of knowledge the target market has about the firm's brand. An organization would like its

brand to be known and instantly recognizable to its intended target markets. Brand superiority refers to the extent to which customers describe it as exceptional (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2012). That is, this power dimension relates to how superior the target group perceives it compared to other brands in its category. Finally, according to existing literature findings, a strong brand should be perceived as excellent and superior (Barijan et al., 2021).

The price of the products: the pricing of detergents and, by extension, their price as it is finally formed is for consumers one of the most basic factors in the choice of detergents. The pricing of these products seems to be shaped by certain factors, which change according to the season and the economic situation of Greece. Also, in Greece, the legislation does not set specific prices for detergents. Detergent prices are determined by the market and are influenced by many factors, such as supply and demand, transportation and distribution costs, and product quality (Buchmüller et al., 2022).

Trust: Lau and Lee (1999), as well as Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2005) defined Trust – Reliability towards the brand as consumers' willingness to trust it in the event of a risk. This definition emphasizes the consumer and their expectations of brand performance under conditions of risk. On the other hand, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2010) argued that the specific term refers to the trust that the consumer displays in a brand and its ability to fulfill its promised value. This definition emphasizes an organization's ability to deliver on its promises, reducing the uncertainty felt by the consumer (Villagra et al., 2021). In addition to these dimensions, Hess and Story (2005) notes that trust depends on the consumer's perception of the brand, characterizing it as honest, trustworthy and expert. Other researchers in the field of social psychology and relationship marketing confirm that trust is a decisive variable for the development of long-term relationships with customers (Benhardy et al., 2020).

Advertising and promotions: through advertising, the demand for detergents is achieved as they become widely known to consumers. The mass media is quite an effective way of advertising detergents as there are not a few consumers who choose to buy detergents they have seen in TV commercials or heard about on the radio. Through television spots, an attractive advertisement can be created that promotes the effectiveness of detergents. Also, through the radio, an image can be created for the consumer from the

lively music and the voice message that will be imprinted in the consumer's memory (slogan). In addition, another way of advertising is through the use of social media, which has developed particularly in recent years as the most modern fruit shops even have pages on social media such as Facebook through which they inform their customers about any offers etc. .. Finally, mainly in supermarkets, these products are advertised through printed offer brochures. More generally, the various ways of advertising and promotions give the consumer a positive image of the company and "invite" him to try its products (Sinha & Verma, 2020).

The demand for detergents in the Greek market is indirectly influenced by social and economic factors, such as:

- The number of Greek households and their size,
- the price of detergents - soaps,
- advertising and product promotion methods,
- the standard of living and
- the evolution of the domestic market for washing machines / dishwashers.

The number of Greek households and their size is a key determinant of the demand for detergents and soaps intended for domestic use. Another important factor influencing the structure of demand for cleaning products is advertising. Companies operating in the detergent industry operate in a very competitive environment, which has led them to allocate significant funds to advertising their products. Advertising in the mass media, and especially on television, influences the consumption habits of a significant portion of consumers while informing about new products and brands available on the market (ICAP, 2016).

Companies operating in the detergent industry use a variety of sales promotion methods to attract the buying public. Promotional gifts, discount coupons, contests and economical packages are now found in most brands and throughout the year. These offers positively affect the demand of the specific brands, as they provide an additional incentive for buyers to choose them over competitors (ICAP, 2016).

The standard of living of the average consumer influences to some extent the demand for detergents and soaps. With the rise in living standards, in addition to the improvement of people's hygiene and cleanliness, there is also a gradual growth in demand

for cleaning products that cover specialized needs (detergents for colored or black clothes, detergents for babies, detergents in a variety of fragrances, soaps for dry skins, in practical packaging, etc.). At the same time, as consumers' living standards rise, their choices are influenced less by price and more by consistent quality and brand awareness (ICAP, 2016).

3. Data and Analysis

3.1 Questionnaire analysis

To answer the research questions, it was considered that the most appropriate type of research was quantitative research, which is often used, especially when the researcher's goal is to gather consumer preferences. Therefore, it was considered that the research should be designed based on this strategy in order to collect sufficient data around the specific topic. At the same time, it was preferred to conduct quantitative research, since it is a research method characterized by ease of use and ease of collecting a volume of research data, usually numerical, in a short period of time, in contrast to qualitative research, which is more time-consuming and more complicated to conduct. Additionally, quantitative research serves purposes of generalizability, while being associated with deriving descriptive and inductive results, which can provide useful information about the preferences of a specific population.

After it was decided that the data should be collected through a quantitative survey in order to answer the research questions, the questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate tool, as explained earlier. The questionnaire was created with the help of Google Form. Since participation in the survey was voluntary, respondents had the right not to participate if they did not wish to do so. In order not to feel pressured in case they wished not to participate, but also to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality in case they decided to participate, the respondents had to consent to their participation in the research.

Overall, the research questionnaire was divided into two sections. In the first section, consumer demographics were recorded. In the second section, their perceptions of the factors influencing the purchase of detergents were recorded. The factors evaluated were as follows:

1. Cost
2. Product quality
3. Product display
4. Environmental attitude/ Environmental concern

5. Media exposure-/Advertisements
6. Social influence
7. Trust
8. Attitudes
9. Product knowledge
10. Promotion
11. Chemophobia

The questions were based on similar surveys drawn from similar surveys in the literature (Chang & Chen, 2022; Chen et al., 2018; Herz et al., 2022).

3.2 Available data

For the analysis of the data collected from the 40 consumers, the statistical analysis software Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 was used. For the purposes of the thesis, an analysis was carried out by calculating both descriptive statistics indicators for capturing the trend in the sample as well as inductive statistical tests to test for differences in consumer demographic characteristics. In more detail, percentage distributions were calculated as well as indices of central tendency and variability, mean (M.O.) and standard deviation (S.D.). Descriptive statistics indicators were used in order to derive results for consumer preferences. Comparisons were then made regarding the level of burnout in terms of consumer demographic characteristics. Comparisons were based on t-tests and one-way ANOVA. The t-test was used to compare two independent groups (eg comparing men and women) while the one-way ANOVA was used to compare three or more independent groups (eg comparing between age groups) All analyzes were performed at the $\alpha = 5\%$ significance level.

3.3 Data Analysis and Results

In total, 40 consumers participated in the survey, of which 27 (67.5%) were women and 13 (32.5%) were men. Of the total sample, 42.5% ($n = 17$) belonged to the age group 45-55 years, 25% ($n = 10$) belonged to the age group 35-45 years, 17.5% ($n = 7$) belonged to age group 18-35 years and 15% ($n = 6$) were over 55 years of age (Table 1). The findings show that 42.5% ($n = 17$) of the consumers in the research sample held a

bachelor's degree while 30% (n = 12) held a master's or doctoral degree. A smaller percentage of consumers reported that they are graduates of up to secondary education (n = 4, 10%) or holders of a second degree (n = 7, 17.5%). The majority of consumers were married (n = 25, 62.5%) and worked in the private sector (n = 20, 50%). Accordingly, 20% (n = 8) of consumers worked in the public sector and 12.5% (n = 5) were self-employed. Finally, results in Table 1 indicate that 37.5% (n = 15) of consumers had a monthly income up to 1000 euros and 47.5% (n = 19) of consumers had a monthly income between 1001 to 2000 euros.

Table 1. Sample demographics (N = 40)

		n	%
Biological gender	Male	13	32.5%
	Female	27	67.5%
Age	Up to 35 years	7	17.5%
	35-45 years	10	25.0%
	45-55 years	17	42.5%
	55 years and above	6	15.0%
	Highest degree	Up to secondary	4
	Bachelor's degree	17	42.5%
	Second Degree University	7	17.5%
	Postgraduate degree	8	20.0%
	Doctoral title	4	10.0%
Family status	Single	13	32.5%
	Married	25	62.5%
	Other	2	5.0%
Monthly income	0-1000	15	37.5%
	1001-2000	19	47.5%
	2001-3000	3	7.5%
	3001+	3	7.5%
Employment status	Private employee	20	50.0%
	Civil Servant	8	20.0%
	Freelancer	5	12.5%
	Retired	3	7.5%
	Student	2	5.0%
	Unemployed	2	5.0%

From the analysis of the data it emerged that the consumers in the research sample spend on average 28.7 (SD = 24.8) euros each time for the purchase of detergents (Table 2).

Table 2. Results on how much money consumers spend on average to buy detergents

How much did your home detergent cost each time?	Mean	28.7
	Median	20.0
	SD	24.8
	Minimum	4.0
	Maximum	100.0

In Table 3 the results regarding the frequency with which they buy detergents are presented. The results show that 45% (n = 18) of consumers buy detergents once a month while 32.5% (n = 13) of consumers buy detergents twice a week. A smaller percentage of consumers reported that purchase detergents once every three weeks (n = 6, 15%) or every week (n = 3, 7.5%)

Table 3. Results for how often consumers buy detergents

		n	%
Purchase frequency of home detergents	I buy it every week.	3	7.5%
	I buy once every two weeks.	13	32.5%
	I buy once every three weeks.	6	15.0%
	I buy it once a month.	18	45.0%

In Table 4 are presented the findings of the analysis regarding the factors that are important to consumers for purchasing detergents. The results show that the most important factors are environmental concerns (M = 4.2, SD = 1.1) and offers (M = 4.1, SD = 1.2). Also quite important factors are product quality (M = 3.5, SD = 1.1), chemophobia (M = 3.3, SD = 0.7), social influence (M = 3.0, SD = 1.0) and product display (M = 3.0, SD = 1.0). Conversely, less important factors are cost (M = 2.5, SD = 0.9), attitude (M = 2.8, SD = 1.0), product knowledge (M = 2.8, SD = 0.7), trust (M = 2.7 SD = 1.1) and media advertisements (M = 2.8, SD = 1.0).

Table 4. Descriptive analysis results for the factors influencing consumers' choice of detergents

	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Chemophobia	3.3	0.7	1.8	5.0
Environmental Concern	4.2	1.1	1.0	5.0
Product knowledge	2.8	0.8	1.0	4.3
Trust	2.7	1.1	1.0	5.0
Media exposure/Advertisements	2.8	1.0	1.0	5.0
Social influence	3.0	1.0	1.0	5.0
Cost	2.5	0.9	1.0	4.5
Attitude	2.8	1.0	1.0	5.0
Product quality	3.5	1.1	1.0	5.0
Product display	3.0	1.0	1.0	5.0
Promotion/ Offers	4.1	1.2	1.0	5.0

The findings of the analysis controlling for differences in consumer demographics are presented on the following paragraphs. First, in Table 5 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the t-test statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' gender. The analysis showed that women ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.7$) express a greater degree of phobia for chemicals that include in detergents compared to men ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 0.5$) ($t = -2.127$, $p = 0.041$). Similarly, women ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.5$) are more influenced by environmental concerns to purchase detergents compared to men ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 1.4$) ($t = -3.255$, $p = 0.006$). Additionally, women ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 0.9$) are more influenced by quality for purchasing detergents compared to men ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.2$) ($t = 2.358$, $p = 0.024$). Finally, women ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 1.0$) are more influenced by offers to buy detergents compared to men ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.3$) ($t = 2.204$, $p = 0.034$).

Table 5. Comparison of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' gender

	Biological gender	M	SD	t	p
Chemophobia	Male	3.0	0.5	-2.127	0.041
	Female	3.4	0.7		
Environmental Concern	Male	3.3	1.4	-3.255	0.006
	Female	4.6	0.5		
Product knowledge	Male	2.5	0.6	-1.370	0.179
	Female	2.9	0.9		
Trust	Male	2.8	1.1	0.340	0.736
	Female	2.7	1.1		
Media exposure/Advertisements	Male	3.1	0.8	1.070	0.291
	Female	2.7	1.1		
Social influence	Male	3.1	0.6	0.176	0.862
	Female	3.0	1.1		
Cost	Male	2.7	0.9	0.897	0.375
	Female	2.4	0.9		
Attitude	Male	2.8	1.1	0.192	0.849
	Female	2.8	1.0		
Product quality	Male	2.9	1.2	-2.358	0.024
	Female	3.7	0.9		
Product display	Male	3.1	0.8	-0.103	0.918
	Female	2.9	1.1		
Promotion/ Offers	Male	3.5	1.3	-2.204	0.034
	Female	4.4	1.0		

In Table 6 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the one-way ANOVA statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' age. From the analysis, no statistically significant differences were recorded regarding consumers' age groups (18-35 years, 35-45 years, 45-55 years and 55+ years) ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. Comparisons of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' age

		M	SD	F	p
Chemophobia	Up to 35 years	3.4	0.5	0.174	0.913
	35-45 years	3.4	0.9		
	45-55 years	3.2	0.6		
	55 years and above	3.3	0.9		
Environmental Concern	Up to 35 years	4.0	1.0	0.841	0.480
	35-45 years	4.6	0.4		
	45-55 years	4.1	1.2		
	55 years and above	3.9	1.5		
Product knowledge	Up to 35 years	2.8	0.9	0.891	0.455
	35-45 years	2.6	0.9		
	45-55 years	2.7	0.8		
	55 years and above	3.2	0.7		
Trust	Up to 35 years	3.1	1.6	0.680	0.570
	35-45 years	2.4	1.1		
	45-55 years	2.8	0.8		
	55 years and above	2.8	1.1		
Media exposure/Advertisements	Up to 35 years	2.8	1.2	1.113	0.356
	35-45 years	2.9	0.8		
	45-55 years	3.1	1.0		
	55 years and above	2.2	1.2		
Social influence	Up to 35 years	3.2	1.3	0.535	0.661
	35-45 years	3.1	0.8		
	45-55 years	3.1	0.9		
	55 years and above	2.6	1.0		
Cost	Up to 35 years	2.6	1.5	0.170	0.916
	35-45 years	2.4	1.1		
	45-55 years	2.6	0.7		
	55 years and above	2.6	0.7		
Attitude	Up to 35 years	2.3	1.1	0.764	0.522
	35-45 years	2.8	1.1		
	45-55 years	3.0	0.8		
	55 years and above	2.8	1.5		
Product quality	Up to 35 years	3.3	1.0	1.091	0.365
	35-45 years	4.0	1.1		
	45-55 years	3.4	1.0		
	55 years and above	3.2	1.5		
Product display	Up to 35 years	2.7	1.0	1.447	0.245
	35-45 years	3.0	1.2		

	45-55 years	3.2	0.9		
	55 years and above	2.3	0.8		
Promotion/ Offers	Up to 35 years	4.3	1.1	0.762	0.523
	35-45 years	4.5	1.0		
	45-55 years	3.8	1.3		
	55 years and above	4.0	1.3		

In Table 7 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the t-test statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' family status. The analysis showed that married consumers ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.0$) are more influenced by trust for purchasing detergents compared to single consumers ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.9$) ($t = -2.090$, $p = 0.044$). No statistically significant difference was recorded from the remaining comparisons.

Table 7. Comparisons of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' family status

	Family status	M	SD	t	p
Chemophobia	Single	3.4	0.5	0.525	0.603
	Married	3.2	0.8		
Environmental Concern	Single	4.3	1.1	0.195	0.847
	Married	4.2	1.0		
Product knowledge	Single	2.5	0.8	-1.282	0.208
	Married	2.9	0.8		
Trust	Single	2.2	0.9	-2.090	0.044
	Married	2.9	1.0		
Media exposure/Advertisements	Single	2.8	1.2	-0.616	0.542
	Married	3.0	0.9		
Social influence	Single	3.0	1.0	-0.246	0.807
	Married	3.1	0.9		
Cost	Single	2.8	1.1	1.332	0.191
	Married	2.4	0.8		
Attitude	Single	2.4	1.0	-1.865	0.070
	Married	3.0	1.1		
Product quality	Single	3.2	1.2	-0.973	0.337
	Married	3.6	1.1		
Product display	Single	2.8	0.9	-0.709	0.483
	Married	3.1	1.0		
Promotion/ Offers	Single	4.0	1.4	-0.507	0.616
	Married	4.2	1.0		

In Table 8 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the one-way ANOVA statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' educational level. From the analysis, no statistically significant differences were recorded regarding consumers' educational level (up to secondary, bachelor's degree, second degree, postgraduate degree, doctoral title) ($p > 0.05$).

Table 8. Comparisons of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' educational level

		M	SD	F	p
Chemophobia	Up to secondary	2.9	1.0	1.316	0.283
	Bachelor's degree	3.5	0.8		
	Second Degree	3.4	0.5		
	Postgraduate degree	3.1	0.5		
	Doctoral title	3.0	0.4		
Environmental Concern	Up to secondary	3.1	2.0	1.466	0.234
	Bachelor's degree	4.2	0.9		
	Second Degree	4.4	0.8		
	Postgraduate degree	4.3	1.0		
	Doctoral title	4.7	0.3		
Product knowledge	Up to secondary	2.3	0.7	1.191	0.332
	Bachelor's degree	2.6	0.8		
	Second Degree	3.0	0.7		
	Postgraduate degree	2.8	0.9		
	Doctoral title	3.3	0.7		
Trust	Up to secondary	2.3	1.3	0.496	0.739
	Bachelor's degree	2.6	1.1		
	Second Degree	3.1	0.8		
	Postgraduate degree	2.9	0.8		
	Doctoral title	2.9	1.5		
Media exposure/Advertisements	Up to secondary	2.4	0.9	0.405	0.803
	Bachelor's degree	2.8	1.2		
	Second Degree	2.8	1.0		
	Postgraduate degree	3.0	0.8		
	Doctoral title	3.3	1.0		
Social influence	Up to secondary	3.1	0.6	1.304	0.287
	Bachelor's degree	2.7	1.1		
	Second Degree	3.0	1.1		
	Postgraduate degree	3.3	0.7		
	Doctoral title	3.9	0.9		

Cost	Up to secondary	2.4	1.3	0.586	0.675
	Bachelor's degree	2.4	1.0		
	Second Degree	3.0	0.8		
	Postgraduate degree	2.6	0.8		
	Doctoral title	2.4	1.0		
Attitude	Up to secondary	2.5	1.0	0.619	0.652
	Bachelor's degree	2.6	1.1		
	Second Degree	3.1	0.7		
	Postgraduate degree	3.1	0.8		
	Doctoral title	2.8	1.7		
Product quality	Up to secondary	3.0	1.8	1.574	0.203
	Bachelor's degree	3.5	0.9		
	Second Degree	3.9	0.7		
	Postgraduate degree	3.9	1.0		
	Doctoral title	2.5	1.3		
Product display	Up to secondary	2.5	0.6	1.346	0.272
	Bachelor's degree	2.6	1.1		
	Second Degree	3.4	1.0		
	Postgraduate degree	3.3	0.7		
	Doctoral title	3.3	1.0		
Promotion/ Offers	Up to secondary	3.5	1.7	0.476	0.753
	Bachelor's degree	4.3	1.2		
	Second Degree	4.3	1.0		
	Postgraduate degree	3.9	1.2		
	Doctoral title	4.0	0.8		

In Table 9 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the one-way ANOVA statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' monthly income. The analysis showed that consumers with a monthly income of up to 1000 euros ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.6$) are more influenced by chemical ingredients for purchasing detergents compared to consumers with a monthly income of 1001-2000 euros ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.8$) and compared to consumers with a monthly income of 2001+ euros ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 0.4$) ($F = 3.682$, $p = 0.035$). Moreover, analysis showed that consumers with a monthly income of 2001+ euros ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.8$) are more influenced by trust for purchasing detergents compared to consumers with a monthly income of 1001-2000 euros ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.0$) and compared to consumers with a monthly income of up to 1000 euros ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.0$) ($F = 3.677$, $p = 0.035$).

Table 9. Comparisons of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' monthly income

		M	SD	F	p
Chemophobia	0-1000	3.6	0.6	3.682	0.035
	1001-2000	3.3	0.8		
	2001+	2.7	0.4		
Environmental Concern	0-1000	4.3	1.2	0.147	0.864
	1001-2000	4.1	1.0		
	2001+	4.1	0.8		
Product knowledge	0-1000	2.8	0.8	0.829	0.444
	1001-2000	2.6	0.7		
	2001+	3.1	1.1		
Trust	0-1000	2.3	1.0	3.677	0.035
	1001-2000	2.8	1.0		
	2001+	3.6	0.8		
Media exposure/Advertisements	0-1000	2.5	1.2	0.977	0.386
	1001-2000	3.0	0.8		
	2001+	2.9	1.1		
Social influence	0-1000	2.7	0.9	1.250	0.298
	1001-2000	3.2	0.9		
	2001+	3.3	1.3		
Cost	0-1000	2.5	1.1	0.007	0.993
	1001-2000	2.6	0.7		
	2001+	2.5	1.3		
Attitude	0-1000	2.3	0.6	2.893	0.068
	1001-2000	3.0	1.2		
	2001+	3.3	1.2		
Product quality	0-1000	3.5	1.1	0.044	0.957
	1001-2000	3.4	1.1		
	2001+	3.5	1.0		
Product display	0-1000	2.5	0.9	2.481	0.097
	1001-2000	3.3	1.0		
	2001+	3.0	0.9		
Promotion/ Offers	0-1000	4.1	1.4	0.177	0.839
	1001-2000	4.2	1.0		
	2001+	3.8	1.2		

In Table 10 are presented the findings of the analysis based on the one-way ANOVA statistical criterion for the comparison in terms of consumers' occupational status. From the analysis, no statistically significant differences were recorded regarding consumers' occupational status (private employee, civil servant, freelancer and retired/ student/ unemployed) ($p > 0.05$).

Table 10. Comparisons of factors influencing choice of detergents regarding consumers' occupational status

		M	SD	F	p
Chemophobia	Private employee	3.4	0.7	1.031	0.391
	Civil Servant	3.4	0.8		
	Freelancer	2.8	0.7		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	3.3	0.5		
Environmental Concern	Private employee	4.2	0.9	1.510	0.228
	Civil Servant	4.3	1.1		
	Freelancer	3.3	1.9		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	4.6	0.4		
Product knowledge	Private employee	2.6	0.8	1.458	0.242
	Civil Servant	3.3	0.4		
	Freelancer	2.7	0.9		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.8	1.0		
Trust	Private employee	2.6	0.9	0.584	0.629
	Civil Servant	2.8	1.2		
	Freelancer	3.3	1.3		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.6	1.2		
Media exposure/Advertisements	Private employee	2.8	1.1	0.307	0.820
	Civil Servant	3.1	0.8		
	Freelancer	2.7	0.4		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.6	1.4		
Social influence	Private employee	3.0	0.9	2.745	0.067
	Civil Servant	3.7	0.6		
	Freelancer	3.2	1.2		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.4	1.1		
Cost	Private employee	2.7	1.0	0.891	0.451
	Civil Servant	2.3	0.8		
	Freelancer	2.1	0.7		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.6	1.0		
Attitude	Private employee	2.9	0.9	0.766	0.521
	Civil Servant	2.5	1.1		

	Freelancer	2.4	1.1		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	3.1	1.3		
Product quality	Private employee	3.7	1.0	2.159	0.110
	Civil Servant	3.8	0.7		
	Freelancer	2.4	1.1		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	3.4	1.3		
Product display	Private employee	3.0	1.0	0.588	0.627
	Civil Servant	3.3	1.3		
	Freelancer	2.6	.5		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	2.7	1.0		
Promotion/ Offers	Private employee	4.1	1.4	2.441	0.080
	Civil Servant	4.6	0.5		
	Freelancer	3.0	1.0		
	Retired/ Student/ Unemployed	4.4	0.8		

4. Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to examine the factors that influence consumers' choice of detergents. From the findings of the thesis it emerged that the factors that consumers evaluate to a large extent during the process of choosing detergents are the various environmental concerns they may have and the offers they provide (e.g. discount price, possible better price for the purchase of a second product, free supply of the second product etc). Research in the literature has reported that in recent years, when purchasing detergents, consumers take seriously whether the products are environmentally friendly and enhance sustainability (Buchmüller et al., 2022; Jo & Shin, 2017). For example, Buchmüller et al. (2022) reported that a significant percentage of consumers when purchasing products for household use today take into account whether they are environmentally friendly. Similar researches report that the price of the products and the offers they provide can attract consumers to purchase detergents (Buchmüller et al., 2022; Sinha & Verma, 2020). For example, Sinha and Verma (2020) reported that detergent companies that provide frequent promotions attract a higher percentage of consumers. Promotions are a particularly important factor in the purchase of household products and detergents.

In addition, from the findings of the thesis it emerged that consumers evaluate to a significant degree factors such as product quality, chemophobia, social influence and product display. Product quality is an important factor when choosing home detergents, as according to Villagra et al. (2021), detergent quality enhances consumer trust in a detergent company. Strengthening this trust has a positive effect on consumers' intention to buy the same product again in the future (Achav & Danso-Boateng, 2021; Sari, 2020). Chemophobia is a new term that has been used in recent years in the detergent market and refers to whether consumers are afraid of being exposed to the chemical components contained in detergents (Kwon et al., 2020). Detergents can contain chemicals that are sometimes dangerous, leading consumers to prefer detergents that they know have fewer chemicals (Buchmüller et al., 2022; Saleh et al., 2019). Additionally, the research confirmed that social influence can have an important role in shaping consumer attitudes towards home detergents. For example Barbu et al. (2022) report that the influence of friends, family and the work environment can be important during the process of

purchasing a household product, such as home detergents. Finally, the product display seems to play an important role when purchasing home detergents, i.e. whether the product label includes in detail all the ingredients contained in a household detergent. Kholod et al. (2023) reported that consumers now want to know in detail what the products they buy contain and make their final decision based on this information

5. Conclusions

5.1 Implications

The theory of consumer behavior tries to give value to his preference regarding the produced goods and their utility. The consumer should only compare the utility of the product he has chosen to satisfy his needs. It is worth noting that if a consumer believes that a commodity cannot offer him more social utility than the value of the commodity itself, then he will proceed to purchase the product or vice versa. Consumer theory offers a basis for policy making and direction on how individuals may react to policy being made. Under certain conditions, it can closely approximate actual behavior.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the factors that influence consumer preferences in Greece regarding the purchase of detergents for household use. The results of the research showed that the most important factors influencing consumer preferences are whether the detergents meet specific specifications regarding the environment (environmental concerns) and the offers given when purchasing the detergents. Also, the quality of the products, whether they contain chemical elements that are considered dangerous and whether they include all the necessary information on their label (product display) play an important role in shaping consumer preferences. The findings highlighted some significant differences in terms of consumer demographics (gender, family status, monthly income). These findings show that companies in the household detergent sector in Greece must focus on providing offers in combination with promotion of environmentally friendly products. This way they could attract more customers and improve their profitability.

5.2 Limitations

An important limitation of the present research is the non-representativeness of the sample and the use of purposive sampling. Therefore, its results must be analyzed with caution as the research sample cannot be considered representative of the population. In addition, an important limitation of the research is that the level of self-efficacy was assessed using a self-report tool (questionnaire). The use of self-report instruments is associated with a risk of response bias as the consumer may feel uncomfortable stating their true preferences. Also, in self-report instruments, sometimes participants give

socially desirable responses that do not capture the reality of their situation. An important limitation is that the survey was conducted by online distribution of a questionnaire. In this form of research it is not possible for the researcher to verify who actually answers the research questionnaire.

5.3 Future research

The above limitations are an important issue to be addressed in future studies. According to the aforementioned, for the safest conclusion a sample should be taken using some sampling technique that enhances the external validity of the research (eg simple random sampling) while statistical techniques should be used on the basis of which the sample size will be defined in order to maximize the statistical power of the results. Finally, in future research, other factors possibly related to consumer behavior regarding the purchase of detergents could be included.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

A. Demographics

1. Biological gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Age

Up to 35 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-45 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-55 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
55 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Highest degree

Up to secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second Degree University	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctoral title	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Family status

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Monthly income:

0-1000	<input type="checkbox"/>
1001-2000	<input type="checkbox"/>
2001-3000	<input type="checkbox"/>
3001+	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Employment status:

Private employee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Civil Servant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Freelancer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>

Unemployed

B. Home detergent purchase

1. Purchase frequency of home detergents

I buy it every week.	I buy once every two weeks.	I buy once every three weeks.	I buy it once a month.

2. How much did your home detergent cost each time? Give an approximate answer in euros

3. How important is the price of a detergent in your decision to buy it:

Not important at all	A bit important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

Please answer the following questions on a scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I often find the danger and safety recommendations on household detergent products exaggerated					
2. I have the feeling that household detergent products could endanger my health.					
3. In my daily life, I do not think a lot about whether detergent products					

endanger my health					
4. The dangers associated with detergent products preoccupy me.					
5. I would like all detergent products to be risk-free.					
6. Human intervention in the environment often has disastrous consequences.					
7. The balance of nature is very delicate and can easily be disturbed by human activity					
8. I am concerned about the deteriorating quality of the environment					
9. I am able to judge whether the detergent products I buy are environmentally friendly.					
10. I know more about detergent products than the average person.					
11. I understand the labels used on the packaging of detergent products					
12. I trust the production processes of detergent retail brands					
13. I trust the quality control processes of detergent retail brands					
14. My attitude towards detergent brands is positive					
15. I often see messages of detergent brands on TV.					
16. I often see messages of detergent brands on social media.					
17. If my friends purchase detergent products, I will buy them.					
18. I will share information to buy detergent products with my friends					

19. The price of detergent products are economical.					
20. The price of detergent products are acceptable.					
21. The quality of detergent products is a factor that affects me during the purchase process					
22. Display of detergent products is an important factor that affects me during the purchase process					
23. When I buy detergent products I look for offers					

Items: 1-5: Chemophobia

Items: 6-8: Environmental Concern

Items: 9-11: Product knowledge

Item 12-13: Trust

Item 14: Attitude

Items 15-16: Media exposure-/Advertisements

Items 17-18: Social influence

Items 19-20: Cost

Item 21: Product quality

Item 22: Product display

Item 23: Promotion

