

THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER PREFERENCES ON CHINESE PRODUCT EXPORTS THROUGH SHOPEE TO THAILAND UNDER COVID-19

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Abstract: Since 2019, COVID-19 has spread worldwide, affecting numerous nations and regions. Many businesses felt the effects of the economy and epidemic policies. The e-commerce sector has increased throughout this time as well. Through cross-border marketplaces like Shopee, which allows many Chinese people to sell their goods to the Thai market, many Chinese vendors will sell their wares. Recognizing consumer preferences changes during the epidemic is crucial for boosting sales. Based on a current literature review, theory, quantitative analysis, research definitions, and design of questionnaires in accordance with the view and related requirements, this paper expands the study of consumer preferences to the field of cross-border logistics. Survey results are collected, data is analyzed using SPSS software, the analysis process is discussed, the findings are summarized, and the study is completed. According to the study, retailers' decision-making on product selection and pricing is mainly influenced by the effects on various consumer types, including the purchasing process, sex, earnings, and existing policies. The research findings in this article recommend that cross-border e-commerce businesses offer differentiated offerings following various target markets, which is essential for cross-border e-commerce to cut costs further and boost export efficiency.

Keywords: *Assessment, COVID-19, consumer preferences, Shopee, E-commerce, Thai Market, Chinese product*

1. Introduction

Since 2019, COVID-19 has erupted worldwide, and many countries and regions have been affected. Some small and medium-sized enterprises have failed because of the epidemic outbreak (Zhang, 2021). The COVID situation is still not good worldwide, but there still are many Chinese workers, students, and even people who live in Thailand. As a country with a high degree of globalization, Thailand also firmly accepts new products. However, E-commerce in Thailand is still in its infancy, has a lot of room for development, and has attracted more and more attention (D.X. & S.S., 2021). This article examines consumer preferences' influence on Chinese product exports through Shopee to Thailand under COVID-19. And try to study the effect of demographic factors on different types of consumers, such as buying experience, sexuality, wage, and current policies, and to what extent they affect merchants' product selection and pricing. Finally, to explore the helpful way to increase seller's revenue.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumer Preferences

According to economics and social sciences, preference is the order in which a person (or an agent) gives alternatives according to their relative utility. This process immediately yields the best choice, whether virtual or real. Preferences are evaluations; they concern matters of value, typically relating to practical reasoning. Instead of the prices of goods, personal income, or availability of goods, the character of the preferences is determined purely by a person's tastes. People will expect to act in their best and most rational interests. They will choose the option that maximizes their appeal and profit. In addition, in each set of alternatives, preferences will appear. Individual consumers have a bunch of preferences and values, and their decisions are beyond the scope of economics. Undoubtedly, they depend on culture, education, personal taste, and many other factors. In this specific concept, the value of a particular product is measured according to the actual opportunity cost of consumers who purchase and consume the product (Gersen & Malone, 2011).

The consumer's goal is to choose the combination of products that provides the highest consumer satisfaction. But consumers' choices are greatly restricted. These constraints are defined by the consumer's income and the price the consumer pays for the product. In economics, assumptions are made about consumer preference based on the utility or satisfaction they are likely to glean from their purchasing choices. There are three basic assumptions about consumer preferences: completeness, transitivity, and non-satiation. It is essential to understand that consumer preferences are not dependent upon consumer income or prices. So, a consumer's capacity to buy goods does not reflect a consumer's likes or dislikes.

2.2. Consumer Preferences Changes under COVID-19

According to the marketing book Principles of Marketing, the main factors that affect demand changes are consumer preferences, consumers' income, product prices, prices of substitutes, prices of complementary products, and expected values (expectations are people's The prediction and judgment of the future trend of a particular economic activity. For example, if consumers expect the price to rise, it will stimulate people to buy in advance; if the expected price falls, many consumers will postpone the purchase.), other factors such as the type of goods, Quality, and promotion (Kotler, 2020). The most critical factor affecting demand is the price of the product itself, so the main elements are usually divided into price influence and income influence.

2.3. Product export through E-Commerce

According to Wikipedia's concept, electronic commerce is a way to help buyers buy and sellers sell goods and services and transfer funds or data through electronic networks (what we usually call the Internet). These business transactions are mainly business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), consumer-to-consumer, or consumer (C2C). Typical e-commerce transactions include purchasing products (such as Amazon books and shoes on shopping websites) or services (such as digital music downloads). E-commerce is generally divided into three areas: online retail, electronic market, and online auction.

There are four types of e-commerce mainly, or usually said that E-commerce operates in all four of the following major market segments (Wikipedia), which are Business to Business (B2B), Business to Consumer (B2C), Consumer to Consumer (C2C), Consumer to Business (B2C).

Many people have been shopping online, meaning we all have experience participating in e-commerce. E-commerce is everywhere. But few people know that the history of e-commerce can be traced back to before the emergence of the Internet. E-commerce dates back to the 1960s when companies used an electronic system called electronic data interchange to promote the transmission of documents. But it was not until 1994 that the first deal officially began. This involves an online retail website called net-market, which mainly sells CDs.

2.4. Shopee Platform

According to Shopee's official website and BaiduPedia, Shopee is an e-commerce platform in Southeast Asia and Taiwan, China. It was founded and established in Singapore in 2015 and then expanded to seven markets in Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Shopee has a variety of commodities, including consumer electronics, home, beauty, health care, mother and baby, clothing, and fitness equipment. Shopee has more than 30 million social media fans, 7 million active sellers, and more than 8000 employees all over Southeast Asia and China. Currently, it is the fastest-growing e-commerce platform in Southeast Asia and the preferred platform for many Chinese to sell goods in Southeast Asia.

COVID-19 is not only an unfortunate but also a rare learning opportunity. By reviewing the process of epidemic prevention and control and sorting out some difficulties encountered, business stakeholders can constantly adjust their management policies and company development strategies to cope with potential or potential emergencies in the future (Chen, 2020). But Southeast Asia is the hub of constructing the "21st century Maritime Silk Road". Due to the superposition of geographical, demographic, and economic potential factors, Southeast Asia has increasingly become the blue ocean market for e-commerce development and the first choice for Chinese cross-border businesses to carry out export e-commerce. According to the 2019 Southeast Asia Internet economy report released by Google and Temasek, the e-commerce industry in Southeast Asia has maintained a rapid growth of 62% in the past four years. Currently, the overall e-commerce value in Southeast Asia is US \$38 billion, an increase of 7.6 times over 2015. It is expected that this figure is expected to exceed the US \$150 billion by 2025. However, as of 2019, the proportion of e-commerce in total retail sales in Southeast Asia is still relatively low, only 2-3%. According to the China e-commerce development report (2018-2019), in the first half of 2019, the online retail sales of physical goods in China accounted for 19.6% of the total retail sales of social consumer goods, and the development space of online shopping market in Southeast Asia is enormous. At present, Shopee's seven markets are open to Chinese cross-border sellers.

2.5. Consumer Preferences Sustainable Development Industry

According to Sepúlveda's research, the authors examined Spanish and Colombian consumers' preferences for the origin and some specialty coffee attributes, such as fair trade, sustainable, organic, and gourmet. The present study, using the experimental method of choice as a quantitative technique, found that consumers in Spain and Colombia are ethical; they place a high value on fair-trade coffee. In one article focusing on the Price Elasticity of Demand for Food, the authors reviewed up to 160 studies on the price elasticity of demand for major food categories to assess the average elasticity of food categories and estimated changes in study design. After the study, the price elasticity of food and non-alcoholic beverages ranged from 0.27 to 0.81, with takeaway food, soft drinks, juice, and meat being

the most responsive to price changes, about 0.7 to 0.8. Therefore, it can be predicted that a 10% increase in the price of soft drinks should reduce consumption by 8% to 10%. In the study, the author also analyzed the price impact of alternatives from unhealthy food to healthy food and the price response of high-risk groups (Andreyeva, 2010). Experimental studies conducted in laboratories and intervention settings have shown that lowering the price of healthier foods and raising the cost of less healthy alternatives will shift purchases to healthier food options.

In addition, food far from home is the most sensitive to price changes in other categories, with an index of about 0.81, and is more elastic than domestic food, about 0.59. For example, when the price of whole milk rises, consumers are more likely to switch to reduced-fat or low-fat dairy than skim milk, and low-income people have more excellent price elasticity in demand for milk, which means they are more price sensitive. Based on the continuous development of e-commerce and the continuous progress of science and technology, many scholars began to guess and discuss the marketing methods of e-commerce. Some scholars believe that as a new business model, e-commerce shows a new marketing model with its advantages of virtualization and transparency (Mingxi, 2013). The contemporary e-commerce trend suggests that enterprises change the traditional business model of "product standardization, market homogenization, and long product life cycle" into a new business model of "product diversification and customization".

3. Research Method

3.1. The Research Population

The survey group in this paper is people who want to sell products to the Thai market through Shopee, but this scope is too broad to be effectively studied. During the research and investigation, the author had the opportunity to join a WeChat communication group for e-commerce in Thailand. Most of the Chinese in the group have established shops in Shopee; 468 people in the group are the source of the main findings of this study.

3.2. The research sampling size and the method

This research will determine sample size by applying Taro Yamane's method, and the equation is $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$.

n is the required sample size from the population under study

N is the whole population that is under study

e is the precision or sampling error which is usually 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01

The researcher set the degree of error expected is 0.05 ($e=0.05$), so the result is 215.6682; we count the sampling size to 216.

3.3. The Tools for Research information of questionnaires

In this study, a sample survey was used to conduct a questionnaire survey, and the distribution channels of the questionnaires mainly used the Internet and WeChat group channels. The main population of the questionnaire survey is Chinese Shopee users in Thailand, most of whom also have their own Shopee stores, which is consistent with the research objective of this paper. Since everyone in the WeChat group has been identified as people who have used Shopee, the respondents were randomly surveyed with different genders, ages, and salaries. Relevant conclusions are drawn by collecting, analyzing, and comparing data.

3.4. The Research Hypothesis

- 1) The price and types of goods have a positive effect on consumer preferences
- 2) The Chinese product shopping experience on Shopee or other E-commerce platforms has a positive effect on consumer preferences
- 3) The COVID-19 situation has a positive effect on consumer preferences
- 4) The different consumer preferences influence price setting and product choosing.

This article will analyze relevant factors and data, compare the background before and after COVID-19, and use a questionnaire to get familiar with consumer thoughts to see its relevance and specific impact.

4. Data analysis results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed, 311 were recovered, 5 invalid questionnaires were removed and the remaining 306 showed the basic information of respondents, Male 195, 70%, 63.73%, 3 Female 111, 31.27%, 30, 30, 101 and 122, respectively, 33.01%, ≤ 20 , 34, accounting for 11.11%. Among the academic qualifications, a Bachelor's degree is the most, with 155 people accounting for 50.65%, and a Doctoral degree is the least, with 16 people accounting for 5.23%. The monthly income was 2001-4000, 108, accounting for 35.29%, followed by 4001-8000, accounting for 28.10%, < 2000 , the least, 50, accounting for 16.34%. See the table below.

Respondent's basic information sheet

Items	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	195	63.73%
	Female	111	36.27%
Age	≤ 20	34	11.11%
	21-30	101	33.01%
	31-40	122	39.87%
	> 40	49	16.01%
Education	Less than a Bachelor's degree	51	16.67%
	Bachelor degree	155	50.65%
	Master degree	84	27.45%
	Doctoral Degree	16	5.23%
Monthly income	< 2000	50	16.34%
	2001-4000	108	35.29%
	4001-8000	86	28.10%
	> 8000	62	20.26%

4.2. Credit Validity Analysis

4.2.1. Reliability analysis

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire was conducted to verify its reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient adopts the reliability analysis; the higher the reliability, the higher the reliability. The reliability is insufficient when Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is lower than 0.6. After the Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis, the results show that the overall Cronbach's Alpha reliability values of the

questionnaire are above 0.85, indicating that the scale has high reliability. See the table below.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability analysis

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Totality Cronbach's Alpha	number
Consumer stickiness	0.964	0.886	18
cost performance	0.879		5
Income impact	0.890		5
shopping experience	0.910		6

4.2.2. Validity analysis

1) KMO test

KMO was used to test the correlation and partial correlation between variables, with values between 0 and 1. The closer the KMO statistic is to 1, the stronger the correlation between variables; the weaker the partial correlation, the better the effect of factor analysis. When the KMO statistic is below 0.5, the factor analysis is unsuitable. After the KMO and Bartlett test, KOM=0.935, and the Bartlett sphericity test passed the significance level of $P < 0.001$, indicating that it is suitable for factor analysis. See the table below.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
	Approx. Chi-Square	df	P
0.935	7148.059	561	0.000

2) Total variance interpretation

The total variance interpretation table shows that the 34 variables in this factor analysis extracted four principal component factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, with a cumulative contribution rate of 65.611%, indicating that the four principal component factors can explain the 65.611% of the variation of the 34 problem items in the scale. See the table below.

Total Variance Explained

4.3. Analysis of the differences in satisfaction with demographic variables

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.273	33.156	33.156	11.205	32.955	32.955
2	4.181	12.298	45.454	4.192	12.331	45.286
3	3.526	10.370	55.825	3.502	10.301	55.587
4	3.327	9.787	65.611	3.408	10.025	65.611

4.3.1. Analysis of gender differences in consumer stickiness

The t-test of consumer stickiness among the different sexes showed significant differences ($t=3.877$, $P=0.000 < 0.05$), which was statistically significant, and the consumer stickiness of the male group was higher than that of the female group. See the table below.

Analysis of the differences in consumer stickiness by sex

Gender	N	Consumer stickiness	t	P
Male	195	3.51±0.92	3.877	0.000
Female	111	3.06±1.05		

4.3.2. Analysis of the difference in consumer stickiness in age

ANOVA of consumer viscosity at different ages ($F=4.271$, $P=0.006 < 0.05$) was statistically significant, and 21-30,31-40 years were stickier than at other ages. See the table below.

Analysis of the differences in consumer stickiness at age

Age	N	Consumer stickiness	F	P
≤20 岁	32	2.99±0.96	4.271	0.006
21-30 岁	77	3.43±0.97		
31-40 岁	108	3.51±0.97		
>40 岁	86	3.06±1.01		

4.3.3. Analysis of the differences in consumer stickiness in academic qualifications

Analysis of the variance of the stickiness of consumers with different degrees found no significant difference between the stickiness of consumers with different degrees ($F=1.354$, $P=0.257 > 0.05$), which was not statistically significant. See the table below.

Analysis of differences in consumer stickiness differences in academic qualifications

Education	N	Consumer stickiness	F	P
Less than a Bachelor's degree	51	3.09±1.04	1.354	0.257
Bachelor degree	155	3.41±0.93		
Master degree	84	3.41±1.04		
Doctoral Degree	16	3.30±1.12		

4.3.4. Difference analysis of consumer stickiness in monthly income

Analysis of the variance of consumer stickiness of different monthly incomes found significant differences in consumer stickiness of different monthly incomes ($F=3.902$, $P=0.009 < 0.05$), which was statistically significant, and the stickiness of people with a monthly income of 4001-8000 was higher than that of other income groups. See the table below.

Analysis of the differences in satisfaction at graduate institutions

Monthly income	N	Consumer stickiness	F	P
<2000	50	3.11±0.95	3.902	0.009
2001-4000	108	3.27±1.02		
4001-8000	86	3.64±0.94		
>8000	62	3.28±0.99		

4.4. Correlation analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis method measures the linear correlation between the two variables, X and Y. The Pearson correlation classification method is used to analyze the correlation of consumer stickiness, cost performance, income impact, and shopping

experience to study the factors that may affect consumer stickiness. After the correlation analysis between consumer viscosity and each dimension, consumer viscosity showed significant positive correlation ($r=0.246$, $P < 0.001$), significant negative correlation between consumer viscosity and income impact ($r= -0.294$, $P < 0.001$), and consumer viscosity and shopping experience ($r=0.199$, $P < 0.001$), indicating that each dimension has significant correlation with consumer viscosity. See the table below.

Consumer stickiness is correlated to all dimensions

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Consumer stickiness	cost performance	Income impact	shopping experience
Consumer stickiness	3.349	0.993	1			
cost performance	3.446	1.016	0.246**	1		
Income impact	3.342	1.051	-0.294**	-0.134*	1	
shopping experience	3.357	1.057	0.199**	0.152**	-0.141*	1

Note: * means $P < 0.05$; ** means $P < 0.001$

4.5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The change of the dependent variable is often affected by several important factors. At this time, two or more influencing factors are used as independent variables to explain the change of the dependent variable, which is multiple regression, also known as multiple regression. The general form of its multiple linear regression model is: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots$. In this paper, the multiple linear regression analysis is conducted with consumer stickiness as the dependent variable and cost performance, income impact, and shopping experience as the independent variables.

4.5.1. Model Summary

In the model summary, the fit of this regression model is shown. $R^2=0.148$ in this model, and the adjusted $R^2=0.139$. See the table below.

model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.384	0.148	0.139	0.921

4.5.2. ANOVA

ANOVA is used to test whether the multiple regression model fit is statistically significant. The table shows the F statistics value and the significance P value. The larger the F statistics value, the smaller the corresponding significance P value is, which means that the more significant the regression model is. In this model, $F=17.428$, and $P=0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that this regression model is significant and statistically significant. See the table below.

ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.385	3	14.795	17.428	0.000
	Residual	256.382	302	0.849		
	Total	300.768	305			

4.5.3. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficient table of the multiple linear regression model is to test whether there is a significant linear relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable in the regression model and whether the change in the independent variable can significantly affect the change in the dependent variable.

In the table of the coefficients of the multiple linear regression model, Cost performance, $t=3.549$, $P=0.000<0.05$, Passing the significance test, Statistically significant, It shows that cost performance positively affects consumer stickiness, The higher the cost-performance, The higher the consumer stickiness; The impact of the outbreak on income, $t=-4.622$, $P=0.000<0.05$, Passing the significance test, Statistically significant, Explain that the impact of the epidemic on income negatively affects consumer stickiness, That is, the greater the impact on income, The lower the consumer stickiness; Shopping Experience $t=2.491$, $P=0.013<0.05$, Passing the significance test, Statistically significant, It shows that the shopping experience positively affects consumer stickiness, The better the shopping experience is, The higher the consumer stickiness is. See the table below.

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	3.065	0.316		9.685	0.000	2.443	3.688
cost performance	0.188	0.053	0.192	3.549	0.000	0.084	0.292
Income impact	-0.236	0.051	-0.250	-4.622	0.000	-0.336	-0.135
shopping experience	0.127	0.051	0.135	2.491	0.013	0.027	0.227

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

COVID-19 outbreak of global spread of trade restrictions and air embargo directly destroyed the international free trade system and produced profound trade damage effect; the worldwide trade of goods and services demand shrank sharply, enlarging the trade protectionism to the global trade demand side caused the asymmetric impact, will be the first phase of the economic and trade agreement, the supply of international trade caused a severe impact. The United States, the European Union, Iran, South Korea, and Japan have suffered from the severe epidemic, and ASEAN will become the major growth point of China's foreign trade in 2020. Accordingly, multilateral international organizations should actively promote consultation and cooperation to prevent and control the global epidemic spread, alleviate the adverse impact on global trade, strengthen regional epidemic coordination and cooperation, promote regional trade and investment facilitation, ease trade demand and supply pressure; focus on key epidemic countries, promote bilateral trade and investment cooperation, and enhance the influence of Belt and Road and a community of shared future for mankind; actively explore new growth points of international trade, and support domestic

enterprises to export epidemic prevention products and production materials in international trade.

5.2. Research Recommendation

5.2.1. Relevant recommendation to government import and export measures

Simplify the documents and certification materials. We will further deepen the reform of "delegating power, delegating power, delegating control and providing services", and exempt enterprises from submitting contracts and packing lists in the import and export declaration process. Those whose paper materials need to be verified can provide electronic documents before submitting the paper materials. Implement documents paperless Q to give the enterprises import goods inspection, quarantine certificate information online query, and printing services. We have actively expanded the online verification of inspection and electronic quarantine certificates with foreign official institutions, such as implementing the paperless export certificate to China with the Netherlands and other countries where conditions permit. For the qualified China-Europe freight train manifest, enterprises are allowed to merge to customs declaration. It is convenient for enterprises to handle the customs intellectual property Q record and no longer require enterprises to provide the corresponding goods certification materials.

Reduce customs clearance fees for enterprises. The imported goods that fail to declare their customs declaration due to the epidemic timely have been reduced or exempted, and the time limit for electronic payment of tax collection and tax declaration forms has been extended. So far, 1,569 enterprises have benefited, involving 16.4 billion yuan of taxes, accounting for 40% of the total tax payable in the same period. In addition, the extension of the tax payment period now benefits 106 enterprises, involving 640 million yuan, accounting for 26% of the tax payable over the counter in the same period. Enterprises unable to pay taxes on schedule due to the epidemic can apply for a tax extension for up to three months and receive late fees. In addition, we will actively promote the cooperation and docking between "single window" and banking and insurance institutions and provide online unsecured, low-rate inclusive financial services and policy-based export credit insurance for more than 70,000 enterprises.

5.2.2. Relevant recommendation to large, small, and medium-sized enterprises

It is necessary for the import and export enterprise to timely notify the overseas exporter and inform the overseas exporter of why the payment obligations cannot be fulfilled as scheduled to reduce the operating losses of storage, storage, ship demurrage, and other expenses. In addition, it is necessary for import and export enterprises to timely communicate with the bank to ensure the payment time. To meet the need for epidemic prevention and control, the state has issued a series of special procedures for importing prevention and control materials. For example, financial institutions can first handle import foreign exchange payment business for non- "foreign exchange trade revenue list enterprises" under the guidance of the SAFE Office. However, during the epidemic prevention and control period, the number of banking business personnel has decreased sharply. Therefore, import enterprises should communicate with financial institutions in time to minimize the risk of lagging business handling.

Import and export enterprises must follow up on the policies and regulations of transportation ports during the epidemic. On the one hand, paying attention to the policy provisions of traffic ports can avoid the closure of ports after the arrival of goods at the port,

increasing the logistics costs of both sides. On the other hand, it can also ensure that favorable policies on import and export are not missed. For example, from March 1 to June 30, 2020, port construction fees for import and export cargo Q will be exempted Q, government pricing fees such as port fees and port facilities security fees will be reduced by 20%, and compulsory emergency response services and charges for non-tanker cargo ships will be canceled. In addition, by the end of June, the cost of railway insurance, delayed containers, and freight retention will be halved. Such favorable policies may reduce part of the burden for import enterprises.

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