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LOCAL PRODUCTS DYNAMICS AND THE DETERMINANTS OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR¹

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Abstract:

In recent years the redistribution of economic activities due to the volatile economic and business environment has led to the return of part of the urban population back to the countryside. This resulted in a renewed interest by consumers in authentic local products and services related to tradition, heritage and culture. The rise of local products characterized by some peculiarity in their ingredients can be an essential advantage in developing the agricultural economy, as there will be an improvement in farmers' income, whilst attracting visitors if combined with actions to highlight a place's natural and cultural elements. The present study investigates local products' dynamics in urban markets and explores the socio-demographic characteristics shaping consumer attitudes towards local products. Primary data, collected through a quantitative survey to a sample of 503 consumers, were assessed through exploratory factor analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis and Cluster Analysis. The results indicate that the consumer's education, the products' marketplace, the product labelling and the consumer information about these products define their purchasing behaviour. The study's findings may help formulate policy proposals to increase the demand and consumption of local products, thus creating a greater penetration of local products in the market.

Key words: local product, consumer, cluster

1. Introduction

The EU's strategic goal of producing cheap agricultural products and gaining food self-sufficiency for consumers has primarily been achieved through the Common Agricultural Policy, though with evident negative consequences. The prevalence of

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intensive agriculture, which was the manifestation of the above goal, led to developing specific agricultural development pillars, usually in low productivity plains with the analogous marginalization of regions where agricultural activity was unprofitable due to natural hindrances (Long and van der Poel, 1994). Simultaneously, the specialization and diversity that characterized the production in the open areas were eliminated from planning the development and the agricultural production (Roep and de Bruin, 1994) while the standardization in the production process began to prevail. Besides, intensive production model innovations exogenously imposed on producers marked a withdrawal from local knowledge and the particular characteristics of different regions and a disentanglement between cultivation practices and locality (Jenkins 2000). This affected the massification and globalization of food production and the prevalence of mass food products (Renting et al., 2003).

Nowadays, food quality and nutrition have become issues of significant importance. For this reason, consumers are increasingly showing a growing awareness of local - traditional foods since the prevailing perception is that their ingredients and the way they are produced make them more "pure" and safer than processed ones. The reasons for this shift, although not explicit, are primarily identified in the food crises of recent years, the higher incomes of a particular segment of consumers and the growing environmental, food quality and safety concerns (Renting et al., 2003). Furthermore, the diversification of economic activities and residents' relocation from rural areas has led to a renewed consumer interest in authenticity and products related to tradition, heritage and culture. Accordingly, what came up were an economic opportunity for areas capable of properly diversifying their products and an opportunity for the endogenous potential of less-favoured regions and their development (van der Ploeg et al., 2000). The traditional-local food products are also products connected with the food culture, and through it with its history, customs and traditions. The traditional character of these products is due to the peculiarity of the materials or the way they are prepared (recipe or technology); it has a history of decades or even centuries and is transmitted from generation to generation (Tassiopoulou, 2006).

Local goods are generally considered 'natural goods or services produced or provided by different outdoor businesses and have a recognized socio-economic identity (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1999). On the one hand, the local concept does not have a universal and generally accepted meaning and can often have many conflicting denotations (Goodman 2003). For example, it may refer to a clearly defined geographical area or the highly inherent characteristics of the products of that area, or it may refer to an opposed case of mass-world products. On the other hand, product quality is a socially constructed concept with different meanings and expressions depending on the products, countries, regions, and social context in which they belong (Sage 2003). At the same time, there is the notion of peculiarity that refers to characteristics of products that differentiate them from other similar products. The construction and certification of peculiarity are frequently related to specific or traditional raw materials, specific production methods, and/or associated with a recognizable geographical origin (Tregear 2003). Therefore, the peculiarity is directly related to quality as consumers are increasingly interested in the

place and process of food production, not only for health and safety reasons but also in a nostalgic context for a past period of real food (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1999).

In recent years, the multidimensional value of local products in the diet and the importance of their protection and promotion have been recognized, both for the preservation and continuation of food heritage and the conservation of an area's historical identity. These are in danger of being lost, either due to changes in the sellers' lifestyle or the local economy's development. Because of all the above, both at the national and European level, actions and efforts are being made to establish and promote local traditional products in the European and international markets and return and integrate them into the daily diet of consumers. The situation that prevails in Greece is that even though it has many exceptional quality local products, it has lagged far behind in its establishment and promotion. However, it should be noted that Greece has a rich and unique heritage that places it in a particular place compared to other European countries. This position is further strengthened by its distinct geographical location and history, as it has served as a crossroads for various population groups. The importance of promoting local products is indicated at the same time because, in recent research studies, it was found that the contribution of the Greek traditional diet to the maintenance of human health is crucial. It is also widely known that even today, despite the limited utilization and non-systematic promotion of local products, they are still a "tool" for the development of tourism in many parts of Greece.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned, the current study investigates local products' dynamics in urban markets and explores the socio-demographic characteristics in shaping consumer attitudes towards local products. The research was based on primary data through a quantitative survey (structured questionnaire) to a sample of 503 consumers. The perceptions of consumer's behaviour depicted in the conceptual model were assessed through a series of multivariate analysis involving exploratory factor analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis and Cluster Analysis. The definition of the study's objective will help in the formulation of proposals, which will probably contribute to the increase in demand and consumption of local products, thus creating a greater penetration of local products in the market. Accordingly, the paper's remainder includes the theoretical background in the next section, whereas section three describes the materials and methods employed in the study. The fourth section presents and discusses the results, and the final section concludes.

2. Theoretical background

The degree to which local Greek products are used today, especially in isolated and mountainous areas, reflects a significant extent the context of social development of indigenous peoples since the influx of immigrants, the import of specialized technology from abroad, increased trade, and cultural interactions were unknown phenomena a few years ago in much of the Greek region. Economic developments have led to unrestricted trade in goods and services. The food sector could not be left out of this process of globalization that is mainly reflected in that consumers are increasingly interested in knowing where the products come from and how they are

produced; not only for safety and health reasons but also to satisfy an existing "nostalgia" for past times of "genuine" and "safe" products. The association of the products with the region, regardless of whether they are certified or not, can be considered as a characteristic of their quality, referring mainly to socially constructed perceptions, such as those of the "authentic", the "healthy" and the "traditional" (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998). The hypothesis that consumers identify some designations of origin with the distinct value, authenticity or quality of a product is confirmed by the large proportion of products with a designation of origin in specialities and gourmet foods (de Wit, 1992: 327, 330).

Thus, the existence of well-known "local/regional products", such as Parma prosciutto, Provence lavender or Normandy camembert, can serve as a flag for a region by creating positive associations between place and product, which can then have a positive impact on the tourism development of the region (Parrott et al., 2002: 257). According to Parrot (2002: 246 -47, 252), there are two different food cultures in Europe. A "southern" culture, very rich in local food specialities and a "northern" one, can be characterized as functional, driven by needs and dominated by nationally recognized and homogeneous firms. In the North, local and traditional foods have long been replaced by more standardized and mass-produced products as a more helpful approach to product development has emerged and been adopted. Nevertheless, the logic of financial adequacy and performance prevails.

In contrast, the southernmost EU countries have a long tradition of producing local products, which often have a strong position in the market and can impose higher prices than those of mass-produced products. The consumer's familiarity with this differentiation, based mainly on the region of origin, is in stark contrast to the general expectations of "Northern" consumers, who are accustomed to the "international" market and tend to trust well-known brands (Parrott et al., 2002: 253). However, there are indications that consumers in northern European countries are more open and receptive to quality local products.

Globally, it is a fact that consumers show more confidence in certification measures even if they do not know what conditions products must meet to obtain such a certification. Thus, the designation of origin of the product can bring economic benefits because it enjoys higher prices (Parrot et al., 2002: 246, 248). In fact, in some cases, even double (Skuras & Vakrou). The public interest in the origin and quality of food is increasing, and the tradition is becoming more and more important even if it is a "scene" where the visitor of an area feels it. At the same time, however, he, having that need, does not want this myth to collapse (Lois, 2003). Thus, local products can play a crucial role in developing the respective regions and perhaps to a greater extent of the less favoured ones. This is because local products can help set up a wholly different and integrated production system that probably pre-existed in the area.

However, what the international market needs for local products are to take those initiatives that will successfully take advantage of the local advantages of each region, which will not be limited to the economic and technical infrastructure of each region and each country, but will include their particular local characteristics, the "local environment". Those characteristics of both human and social capital will contribute to

creating appropriate strategies for the promotion of local products and in combination with the preferences, needs, and desires of consumers. Many researchers conclude that the local products and food sector show strong reactions to the imposition of new consumer standards and products trying to impose themselves in the globalized economy.

Factors influencing food choice by consumers

Consumers, in their product purchases, combine a set of features that could be grouped in (a) "research" features which can be identified before purchase; (b) characteristics of "experience" which consumers cannot identify before purchase; and (c) characteristics which cannot be determined by consumers even after consumption and for which consumers are obliged to trust the information provided to them by a third party such as accredited products (Ritson & Mai, 1998). Vander Pol & Ryan (1990) state that the critical factors for the selection and consumption of fruits and vegetables, as they emerged from the consumers themselves, are the price (42%), the family taste preferences (39%), freshness (32%), quality (27%), availability (17%), season (14%), appearance (10%), and nutritional value (2%), while it was observed that consumers did not show any interest in packaging. There is a particular preference for bulk fruits and vegetables because this allows them to choose the quality they want. Also, in the same research, it was found that the market points that consumer prefers are supermarkets and not grocery stores.

Another subjective factor influencing consumers in the food selection process is the consumer's expectations from this market. Expectations are shaped by the consumer's recent experiences with the product before purchasing it, depending on the consumer's quality before consuming the product. The taste experience that the consumer acquires from this product is a memory for the future, which determines the new expectation of each consumer (Grunert, 2002), as found by Harker, Gunson, Brookfield and White (2002), who also noticed that consumers noticed minor differences in the quality (texture) of the apples after repeated consumption for a period of a few days.

Finally, the location and frequency of food purchase are two other factors that are of interest to the study of consumer behaviour. For example, it has been found that the Greek consumer prefers to buy apples from the local market (Fotopoulos et al., 2000), vegetables from the grocery store, the local market and the supermarket (Haratsari, 2004), jams, compotes, and juices, from the supermarkets (Kamenidou, 1999), chewing gum from the kiosk (Tatanis, 2000), while honey directly from the producer with a purchase frequency of once a month (Arvanitidis, 2002), as well as meat with the same frequency of purchase from traditional butchers (Tzimitra, 1997), and olive oil from the supermarkets but also the supermarkets outside cities, as found in the descriptive presentation of the results based on the distribution frequencies of Pitsego (2004).

According to Jacob and Chestnut (1978), the actual consumer behaviour and the rendering of brand importance are directly related to loyalty and, in particular, to loyalty behaviour. Therefore, various measures have been proposed to measure

behavioural loyalty, also known as Brand Performance Measures (BPM). For example, Jarvis et al. (2003), regarding wine loyalty, wondered if consumers showed commitment to specific wine brands or specific product features. This indicates that there are different product categories and not just one, which is based first on the fact that there are different levels of commitment in each category and secondly on their main characteristics (Dore, 2001).

This approach applies to marketing strategies. For example, suppose consumers have high levels of commitment to a local/traditional product feature. In that case, one of the most appropriate marketing strategies will be to adopt loyalty type programs based on these critical characteristics. On the other hand, if a product category exhibits higher conversion levels (switching), then buyer conversion strategies should be applied, such as discounts, always based on these feature categories (Zargli, 2009). Giraud (2003) argued that existing consumers would find it very difficult to increase the consumption of local - traditional products, and thus, consumer loyalty strategies should be adopted.

Chrysochou et al. (2005) focused on measuring behavioural commitment to local-traditional products using the Dirichlet model using panel data collected from supermarkets for two types of products, ham and wine. In the first stage, they checked the correct fit of the model and examined whether it follows the established patterns proven to apply to most product categories. In the second stage, they measured behavioural loyalty based on product characteristics and tested each feature's influence on behavioural loyalty. The results indicated that the price and type of the brand influence consumer loyalty as opposed to the quality label, which is not an equally important factor.

Lobb et al. (2006) came to the same conclusion regarding the price. They found that local products are more expensive than others and, at the same time, consumers have less access to them. These are the main factors that negatively affect the purchase of local products by consumers. Finally, Padilla et al. (2007) attempted to assess consumer preferences and consumers' willingness to pay more money for a validated quality label on traditional foods. The researchers chose three characteristics of a homemade raspberry jam, the price, the quality label and the packaging (the jars' appearance) and respondents were asked to rate these product features according to their preferences. The results showed that the officially validated quality label is the most important feature that influences consumer behaviour regarding product choice. Also, it was found that the consumer is willing to pay more for this feature.

Following market research on local foods, only a very small percentage of consumers buy them despite most consumers being interested in them. This is mainly for reasons related to price, ease of finding and accessibility. For example, according to Wheatherell et al. (2003), this percentage for the United Kingdom corresponds from 6% to 10%. However, in Italy, France and other Mediterranean countries, it is a fact that the most traditional dietary standards and local cuisines retain their dominance (Miele and Murdoch, 2003), so it is likely that in these countries, the corresponding percentages will be higher. A survey by Loureiro and Mc Cluskey (2000) found that in northern Spain, consumers are willing to pay more to purchase local meat, provided that the

meat is of high quality and an indication that it is a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) product. The products' origin and region are vital features for some products, especially those with a good reputation. The study results of Amyx et al. (1990) showed that consumers who are sensitive and aware of environmental issues are willing to pay extra money to buy organic and locally - traditional food.

Barsenas et al. (2001) surveyed the consumer attitudes and preferences towards traditional Spanish cheeses in four provinces of Spain. They found that the primary factor influencing consumer preferences is their organoleptic characteristics such as appearance, smell, taste, and product composition. In contrast, secondary factors are price, information on these cheeses' nutritional value, quality label, and packaging. As concerns, the role of endogenous (colour, taste, smell and appearance) and exogenous (label of origin, and brand) quality characteristics of two traditional foods, olive oil and fermented sausage, the air in the attitude of consumers, Espejo et al. (2007), found that the endogenous characteristics of olive oil in contrast to the exogenous ones more influence the preferences of consumers. On the contrary, fermented sausage air's exogenous elements significantly affected consumer behaviour loyalty than its endogenous characteristics. Finally, Sanzo et al. (2000), by studying the perceptions of consumers in terms of organoleptic, functional (technological and nutritional) and symbolic (geographical origin, and brand) characteristics of honey, concluded that the level of consumer satisfaction does not depend on the functional features of the product. Instead, their satisfaction depends on and is significantly influenced by the product's organoleptic characteristics (taste, smell, appearance and composition) and its symbolic characteristics (brand and geographical origin).

3. Research methodology

The research was based on primary data collected with the use of a survey. The perceptions of consumer's behaviour depicted in the conceptual model were assessed through a quantitative survey of consumer local agricultural products. The study was conducted from June to July 2019, and the survey took place in the Municipality of Orestiada. The survey was based on exploratory questions on the most recent literature on consumer behaviour (Zepeda and Leviten-Reid, 2004; Miroso and Lawson, 2012; Rainbolt et al., 2012; Autio et al., 2013; Arsil et al., 2013). Table 1 below presents some of the general characteristics of the sample consumers. The majority (55.3%) of the sample consumers are men, of which 69.3% are under 25 years of age, while 44.7% of the sample are women, with only 5.3% being over the age of 40 years. Also, 13.3% (67 people) of consumers are married, while 82.7% (416 people) are single.

Table 1 Overview of the socio-demographic characteristics

	Male	Female
Sample size (%)	225 (44,7%)	278 (55,3%)
Mean age (St.Dev)	22,1 (0,4)	25,6 (0,5)
< 25 years	190 (84,5%)	193 (69,4%)
25 - 40 years	23 (13,3%)	71 (24,5%)

> 40 years	12 (5,3%)	14 (6,1%)
Marital status		
Married	12 (5,3%)	55 (19,8%)
Single	207 (92%)	209 (75,2%)
Divorced	6 (2,7%)	14 (5)
Educational stage		
Primary education	2 (0,9%)	2 (0,7%)
Secondary education	88 (39,1%)	93 (33,5%)
Tertiary education	112 (49,8%)	154 (55,4%)
Postgraduate	5 (2,2%)	25 (9%)
Monthly household income		
	941	826
< 1000 €	161 (71,6%)	192 (69,1%)
1000 € - 2000 €	40 (16,9%)	72 (25,9%)
> 2000 €	22 (9,8%)	14 (5%)
Householdsize		
	2,6 (0,1)	2,86 (0,1)
< 3 members	92 (39,5%)	123 (44,2%)
3 - 5 members	121 (53,8%)	148 (53,2)
> 5 members	17 (7,6)	43 (15,5)

Regarding the educational level of consumers, the results revealed that 52.8% of respondents are secondary education while 70.2% (353 people) had a monthly income of less than € 1,000. This consumer behaviour was represented by twenty-three items on which consumers were asked to evaluate their buying behaviour gauged through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-of less important to 5- most important. The marketplace factors were measured with six items where respondents assessed the external framework. The consumers bought a local product through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-completely disagree to -5-completely agree. The reason for purchasing the local agricultural product was gauged through five questions. The respondents were asked to evaluate the grounds using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-little differentiation to 5-great differentiation. As for the evaluation of packaging and labelling of local agricultural product, three questions added where responders expressed their perceptions of their preferences for the packaging and labels of local products. Finally, to assess local product prices, consumers say their belief with three closed-ended questions for the prices of local products, how much more expensive they are than other products, and if they are willing to pay more for a product to purchase it.

As for evaluating consumer information factors about local agricultural products, three items were added where consumers expressed their opinion for the source of information of local products, whether they are informed for these and the details of the products that would like more information. Besides, three questions were added to assess consumer characteristics, including the number of adults in their household and their sex and age. Finally, consumers' social profile was analyzed through their marital status, education level, and monthly family income.

In a first step, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Varimax rotation was employed to uncover the main factors' underlying dimensions. The gain from such a

research method is that we end up with a set of unrelated variables that, for some statistical techniques, are more useful. Therefore, eleven constructs representing the independent factors in the conceptual model were each measured with various indicators. These constructs were: (K1a) supermarket, (K1b) shops at the place of production, (K1c) marketplace of local product, (K2a) reason of buying, (K3a) product labelling, (K3b) product packaging, (K4a) price, (K5a) information, (K6a) age, (K6b) sex and (K7a) education level (Table 2).

To check the predictive validity, the Multiple Regression Analysis was performed, using as a dependent variable the reason for buying local agricultural products and as independent variables all the other factors. After checking the statistical significance of the regression (p -value = 0.00), the following indices were calculated: -the multiple correlation coefficient - $R = 0.632$, which examines the numerous correlations of the dependent variable with the independent and the $R^2 = 0.400$ (otherwise, coefficient of determination which is a measure of the accuracy of adjustment). Thus, the forecast variables interpret 40% of the variance; in other words, 40% of the total data variability has been interpreted by adjusting the standard. - the Adjusted coefficient of determination - Adjusted $R^2 = 0.395$ (R^2 adjusted to the sample size and the number of prediction variables in the equation). These results confirm the concept of predictive validity, while from all the above, it can be concluded that the properties "nomological validity" and "criterion-related validity" are satisfied.

Table 2 Factor Analysis results (Factor loadings, Eigenvalues and variance explained)

Code	Name of factor	Name of variables	Factor Loading	Eigenvalues	Variance %
K1 a	Supermarket	L13 Neighbourhood supermarket	0,729	1,834	29,39
		L14 Commercial shops	0,515		
K1 b	Shops at the place of production	L15 Unique shops selling local products	0,827	1,977	23,33
		L16 Neighbourhood grocery	0,643		
		L17 Shops at the place of production	0,628		
K1 c	Market place of local product	L18 Market place of local product	0,965	1,016	27,58
K2 a	Reason of buying	L19 Cheaper From the habit of always buying something when I visit a place	0,771	2,106	52,64
		L20	0,635		
K3 a	Product Labeling	L25 Product label	0,811	1,323	44,08
		L29 Kind of product	0,814		

K3 b	Product packaging	L24	Product packaging	0,996	1,003	33,43
K4 a	Prices	L26	Prices of local products	0,664	1,434	47,79
		L27	More expensive than other products	0,76		
		L28	Preference for an expensive product	0,644		
K5 a	information	L30	Information source	0,719	1,086	36,20
		L31	Satisfaction of information	0,648		
K6 a	Age	L34	Age	0,781	1,168	38,92
K6 b	Sex	L33	Sex	0,904	1,075	35,84
K7 a	Education level	L36	Education level	0,776	1,609	53,62
		L37	Monthly family income	0,637		

Two analysis methods were combined to group consumer buying behaviour of local agricultural products in the Municipality of Orestiada. In the first stage, hierarchical cluster analysis was used to identify the number of clusters. Subsequently, the non-hierarchical analysis was applied in clusters to identify them in detail, utilizing the findings of the hierarchical analysis. The hierarchical clustering method was performed with the Ward method to minimize the differences within the clusters and the square of Euclidean distance as a distance measure. In selecting the number of clusters to be created, the number of consumers in the sample formed the basis for choosing a range of two to five clusters. The number of clusters arose from the evaluation of agglomeration coefficients and whether the number of consumers in each cluster was of theoretical and practical importance. The researcher is looking for significant increases in the value of agglomeration coefficients to determine the number of clusters created.

4. Results

A review of the consumer buying behaviour literature led to the investigation of seven essential questions, which were checked by Multiple Regression Analysis, to buy local products as a dependent variable. According to the factor analyses and the multiple regression results, we came to the confirmation of eleven factors and the participation of four of them in our model. Furthermore, the value of the correlation coefficient (R^2) of the model's dependent variable was a satisfactory level, which indicates the acceptable interpretation of the factors included in the model (Table 3).

According to the results of the multiple regression analysis, the factor (K7a) level of consumer education (K7a, B: 0.441, $p < 0.01$) is an essential factor in the reason for buying a local agricultural product. Numerous studies have focused on the influence of consumer education on market intent. For example, Yung Hung et al. (2016) cite education as a socio-demographic characteristic that significantly influences consumers' market intention. Similar findings related to education and the intention to purchase functional

foods were reported in a study by Stewart - Knox et al. (2007). According to Chen et al. (2013), the food market was found to increase with the increase in consumer education.

Table 3 Multiple regression results

			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model			B	Std. Error	Beta	t
	(Constant)		2,070	,154		13,404
	K7a	Education level	,441	,034	,462	13,157
	K1c	Market place of local product	,144	,028	,216	5,062
	K3a	Product Labeling	,125	,030	,180	4,221
	K5a	Information	-,054	,024	-,078	-2,236

a. Dependent Variable: K2a - Reason - Market place

The type of local products shop (K1c, B: 0.144, $p < 0.01$) is also an important factor in buying local products. Consumers hearing the word local product have in mind a product made with pure ingredients, without preservatives and with the traditional techniques and recipes of a place. Given that consumers have made a general shift in the quality of their food in recent years, such products as local and organic are at the forefront of their daily lives.

As for the product label factor (K3a), it proved to be important in the reason for buying a local product (K3a, B: 0.125, $p < 0.01$). It is no coincidence that most local products state on their label "local traditional product" or "made with the traditional recipes of our place" or even "made with the secret recipes of the grandmother". Labels like these create security for consumers about how they are produced and about the ingredients of the product they will buy.

The product information factor (K5a, b: -0.054, $p < 0.026$) is related to the consumer's behaviour with a negative sign. The most significant variables of this factor were the source of local products' information and the degree of information satisfaction for local products.

The grouping of consumer buying behaviour revealed two distinct clusters (Table 4). The first cluster consists of 104 consumers representing 20.68% of the total sample of local products' consumers. These consumers have a monthly family income of over € 2,000, while most are willing to pay extra to buy a local product. At the same time, the second cluster consists of 299 consumers representing 79.32% of the total sample. These consumers have a monthly family income below € 550, while 68% are willing to pay more to purchase a local product.

Table 4 Cluster Analysis Results

Code		Cluster 1 (n = 104)	Cluster 2 (n = 399)	F.	Sig.
L34	Age	26,76	24,24	11,65	0,001
L35	Marital status	1,66	1,99	54,43	0,000
L36	Education level	4,57	4,15	10,99	0,001

L27	More expensive than other products	0,83	0,68	8,33	0,004
L37	Monthly family income	2217,31	528,85	997,77	0,001

Table 5 shows some of the consumer demographics of the sample of the two different clusters. The majority (52.88%) of the 1st group consumers are men, and 62.5% (65 people) are between 25 - 40 years old, while only 7% are graduates of higher education. Also, 57.39% (229 people) of the 2nd group of consumers are women, and 91.23% (364 people) are under 25 years old, while the majority has a higher education.

Table 5 Overview of the information of clusters

	Cluster 1 (n = 104)	Cluster 2 (n = 399)
Gender		
Male	55 (52,88%)	170 (42,61%)
Female	49 (44,23%)	229 (57,39%)
AgeGroup		
< 25 years	19 (18,27%)	364 (91,23%)
25 - 40 years	65 (62,50%)	29 (7,27%)
> 40 years	20(19,23%)	6(1,5%)
Education		
Primary education	1(0,96%)	3 (0,75%)
Secondary education	70 (67,31%)	111 (27,82%)
Tertiary education	7(6,73%)	259 (64,91%)
Postgraduate	26 (25,00%)	4 (1,00%)

5. Conclusion

The present paper aimed to investigate the local products' dynamics in urban markets and explore the socio-demographic characteristics in shaping consumer attitudes towards local products. The results indicate some practical policy implications. Increasing the production of local Greek products should be a priority since it is widely known that Greece has a rich and unique heritage that stands out from the rest of Europe, both because of its geographical location and history and because of the recent years there has been a significant shift of consumers towards local and traditional products. That is the products that are considered of superior quality concerning the manufactured products. The possibilities for utilizing local Greek products are many, as long as organized and systematic efforts are made. Some proposed actions that could be implemented to develop local Greek products may include a strategy draft that will concern the research of Greek local - traditional products and implement a specific institutional framework that will refer to the production, certification and marketing of local products. In addition, possible steps for the development of the local product's market may include the cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders (producers, traders, processors, etc.), the identification of

problems in the promotion and marketing of local products and the increased use of the internet for the advertising and sale of local products. Moreover, the communication with consumers and satisfaction of their needs in combination with the help of promotion mechanisms such as labelling, the correlation of local products with tourism, etc., may also add to this direction. For the promotion, promotion, and development of local products, the fruitful cooperation of all stakeholders (producers, handicrafts, food industries, consumers, scientists and competent government agencies) is considered necessary.

The preceding conclusions are taken into account about the limitations of the present study. Thus, proposals for future research on consumer behaviour in the local product market can be made. In particular, the interpretation of the results should be made in the context of the specifics of the local Greek market of local products in the Municipality of Orestiada as the research was limited to consumers in a specific area, in the purchasing context of a small country.

In the present study, only the socio-demographic characteristics in shaping consumer attitudes towards local products were examined. More research could be done to investigate the motivation of consumers to buy local products, their perception of the quality of these products and the percentage of participation these products have in their daily diet. Finally, of particular interest would be conducting a similar survey that in another country with local products and then the comparative evaluation of the results.

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