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**INVESTIGATING CONSUMER CULTURE FORMATION AMONG
IRANIAN FEMALE STUDENTS IN TALTECH**

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I declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously been presented for grading.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to investigate the consumer culture among Iranian female students in Estonia. Research has shown that, producers and distributors normally ignore the consumption needs of minority groups leaving such consumers to adjust to what is available. The study thus looked at the predominant consumer cultures among the Iranian female ladies, the factors that influence their consumption, the processes and experiences in their consumer culture reformation and changes that has occurred in the consumer culture since moving to Estonia. The author adopted the qualitative analysis to research and employed an interview guide for a mini-focus group discussion for collecting the data. The research observed that despite consumer culture as a way of expressing ones taste and preference is forbidding or restricted in Iran, our interviewees seems to be very festive and expressive in their consumption behaviour. They mostly know what they want and are not influenced by celebrity advertisement or peer pressure. Their consumption however is either promoted or demoted by the prevailing culture from their home country and at their present location in Estonia. The research also observed that the freedom of expression in Estonia, the relative simplicity with which social events are organized encourages their increased consumption participation. The research however observed that the absence of English subtitles on products and the lack of many shops selling ingredients for making their traditional meals is affecting their buying and consumption.

Keywords: consumption, consumer culture, consumer behaviour, consumer culture in Iran, consumer culture in Estonia.

INTRODUCTION

According to Arnould & Thompson (2005), consumer cultural theory, as aspect of marketing research, has been involved in the investigation of the contextual, symbolic, and experiential aspects of consumption as they unfold across a consumption cycle that includes acquisition, consumption and possession, and disposition processes and analysis of these phenomena from macro-, meso-, and micro-theoretical.

The author's research through this field of study has come across two broad areas of consumer culture study constellations – the consumption and possession practices, which focuses on the hedonic, aesthetic or ritualistic dimensions, and the disposition practices, that is, the inherent qualities of the mind and character that drives the behavior of consumers towards consumption. Studies or researches regarding the possession practices have received considerable attention from researchers unlike that of disposition practices. The previous research has shown that despite the less attention on the inherent factors towards consumption, the combination of possession and disposition aspects of consumer culture has over the years played a significant role in determining how consumers negotiate and establish their consumption identity. Researchers have established that the broader benefit of consumer culture studies is the emphasis on the productive aspect of consumption and the role it plays in helping decode the factors that form and shapes consumer buying patterns. The understanding of how consumers actively rework and transform the symbolic meanings encoded in the advertisements, brands, retail settings, etc to manifest their particular personal and social circumstances and further their identity and lifestyle goals.

The study of consumer culture mostly focuses on the established behavioural pattern of the majority of consumers and how they respond to advertisements and product offering. Most producers are interested in satisfying the needs of the majority of consumers to make a profit thus leaving behind the needs of the minority and 'specialised' group of people. This thus forces the minority group with specialised interests to either conform or be left behind.

This study looks at consumer culture of Iranian Female students in Tallinn, which can be considered ‘minority’ within a bigger market in Tallinn. The change of environment, routine and exposure to products and advertisement means that new culture towards consumption would be formed. Also considering the differences in orientation and consumption dynamics, the existing producer approach to consumer needs satisfaction in the new environment would become ‘foreign’ and thereby requiring the need for reformation or reshaping their consumption culture. This is likely to impact the evaluation criteria and buying choices. This assumption, thus create the challenge for the investigation of the consumer culture formation among international students or internationals (the broader segment) in general to provide the needed insight for exploration. The research seeks to investigate consumer culture formation among Iranian female students. Iranian female students as international students can be considered as a smaller segment within a bigger market which may have different characteristics and consumption criteria. Previous researches have identified 14 consumer culture such as conspicuous consumption, conspicuous conservation, early adopters, followers, low tech, peak experiences, escapism, traditional cultures, super culture, subculture, normcore, brand aversion, brand indifference and anti-consumers. The research would focus on knowing what type of consumer culture is prevalent among Iranian female student, the processes or experiences involved in the formation of their ‘new’ consumption culture and how that culture is shaped over time. The research seeks to address the following questions:

- What consumer cultures are predominant among Iranian female students?
- What factors influence the consumer culture of Iranian female students?
- What processes or experiences aid the reformation and reshaping of the consumption culture?
- How the consumer behavior of Iranian female students in Estonia have changed over time?

The rest of the work is divided into four (4) sections as follows: The first section explores the conceptual background which involves the literature and explanation of the keywords and concepts, the consumer culture formation, etc. The last three (3) sections discuss the methodology, the results and findings, and the conclusion.

ABBREVIATIONS:

Abbreviations used in this thesis are as follows:

| Abbreviation | | Meaning |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| BGC | - | Belief in global citizenship |
| FCCP | - | Foreign consumer culture positioning |
| GCCP | - | Global consumer culture positioning |
| GCO | - | Global Consumption Orientation |
| LCCP | - | Local consumer culture positioning |

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter builds up the theoretical basis for this study by opening up previous studies on the subject and the aspect this research seeks to focus on. Considering the fact that consumer culture determines how consumers negotiate and establish their consumption identity, this chapter looks at the introduction and background to consumer culture, consumer culture theory, consumer decisions and the consumer consumer culture in both Estonia and Iran. This theoretical discussion forms the basis for which the empirical part of this study is accomplished

1.1 Introduction to Consumer Culture

The introduction to consumer culture as a discipline of study, according to Godwin, et al., (2008), can be attributed to the research work of Adam Smith titled: *The Wealth of Nations*, (1937) in which he identified that much of economic discourse has assumed that everything valued about the functioning of an economy is to be found in the final demand for goods and services and therefore, consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production. Also, the welfare of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer (Godwin et al, 2008). Adam Smith identified the welfare of the producers and that of the consumer as critical in the demand and consumption of products, however, producers must situate their welfare in the context of the consumer. What was implied in that statement was that, the realization of producers' objective of creation or production is tied to the satisfaction of consumer welfare, ie. consumers consume to satisfy their welfare. Consumption is the process by which goods and services are at last, put to final use by the consumer (Godwin, et al. 2008), the demand of the goods and services are influenced or determined by a set of consumer cultural systems or behaviours found in all times and places (Kalmus, Keller & Kiisel, 2009). This consumer cultural systems are transmitted through existing cultural values, norms, and customary ways of doing things from generation to generation and is largely understood to be carried out through the exercise of free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life. (Nijssen & Daugla, 2011)

Thus, consumer culture can be considered as a “social arrangement in which the relations between the lived cultural experience of everyday life and social resources, the meaningful valued ways of life, the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets. (Nijssen & Daugla, 2011). Clifford & Marcus, (1986), posits that consumer culture is bound up with the idea of modernity, that is, a world that is no longer governed by tradition but rather by flux, and in which social actors who are deemed to be individually free and rational holds sway (Slatter, 2000). Sheth, Maholtra & Arnould, (2009), defined consumer culture as a predisposition toward social emulation, matching, and imitation expressed through marketplace choices are accompanied by a proclivity or tendency for differentiation, individuality, and distinction also expressed through marketplace choices.

In another vein, consumer culture denotes an economy in which value has been divorced from the material satisfaction of wants and the sign value of goods takes precedence. (Baudrillard, 1996; Sheth et al, 2009). Consumer culture can, therefore, be summarized as, a set of interconnected economic and cultural institutions complicit in the global production of commodities for individual demand with enormous scope for local elaboration and differentiation (Cook et al., 2015). It illuminates the symbolic embodiment and experiential aspects of acquisition behaviours (Fischer and Arnold 1990; Joy and Sherry 2003; Arnould & Thompson, 2009) and the socio-cultural complexities of exchange behaviours and relationships (Belk et al. 1988; Deighton and Grayson 1995; Arnould & Thompson, 2009).

1.2 Background to consumer culture

The background of consumer culture can be attributed to agents who work directly in the market economy such as managers, marketers and advertisers or brokers. These agents analyse and criticize or recommend consumer products by use of cultural intermediaries, eg. celebrities who model and disseminate attractive models for consumption behaviour; and by protestors who initiate alternative responses to the consumption system, responses that are typically re-appropriated into the market system as differentiated, niche products. Smith (1991) acknowledged that global consumer culture is driven by the extension of businesses organized around market principles into every corner of the planet. It also depends upon global media to create a sense of global identity and memory without which any cultural identity is incomplete. These dynamics are often thought to have been triggered by the purposeful social engineering of marketers,

advertisers and retailers and to have spread from roots in the fashion industry into all parts of social life (William, 1982).

The historical rise to cultural values and norms associated with consumption are said to have dated back to earlier stages of the modern era. It certainly did not emerge in Western culture until after World War II (Westjohn, et al., 2016). Since the 1990s, the historiography of consumption has emphasized the specific culture of consumption which was the driving force in the process of industrialization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Westjohn, et al., 2016). The argument has been that earlier forms of consumer culture can be traced further back to the second half of the sixteenth century. While the acts of buying and using goods in a meaningful social way have no doubt existed since the beginning of civilization (Maggauda 2015), historians of consumption commonly assume that a proper culture of consumption developed only in modern societies as a long-term and progressive process (Kalmus, et al., 2009).

Consumer culture represented a crucial cultural feature in the development of the modern Western world. Its historical emergence could also be interpreted as the result of a specific social configuration, in which the relationship between the symbolic world and material resources started to be mediated through the market and to assume a central role in sociocultural reproduction, in the fulfilment of personal needs and the use of material objects (Slater, 1997). Over the centuries, however, the main features of this consumer culture have been the growth of a materialistic attitude. A tendency to develop forms of social competition through goods, and an increase in the meaningfulness of these goods to express identity and social belonging. After the seventeenth century, this culture of consumption, based on the processes of social stratification, emerged as an influential force, sustaining the formation of modernity, the development of trade and mercantilism, and the adoption of the monetary economy: in sum, it has accompanied the entire rise of modern capitalism. In the nineteenth century, the spread of consumer culture was a prerequisite for the industrial revolution and, consequently, for the diffusion of the industrial mass production of standardized goods, as well as the transformation of cities and the process of urbanization. It thus became an important symbolic dimension in the emergence of the bourgeois and middle classes. In the twentieth-century consumer culture evolved into a crucial facet of society, acquiring a pre-eminent role in the evolution of contemporary global culture. (Slater 1997, 1999)

Historian William Leach (1993) pointed out with reference to the United States that the first part of the twentieth century, was assisted in a wide social effort to promote an orchestrated and

coherent culture of consumption as a system of values, practices, and imageries based on the desire of material objects and the acquisition of goods to fulfil needs and to achieve prosperity and self-realization in society. (Cook, et al, 2015).

1.3 Consumer culture theory

According to Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (1999), globalization has given rise to globally oriented consumer segments, which tend to seek out standards of excellence on a worldwide basis rather than a national or local basis. According to them, Cannon and Yaprak (1998) affirm that firms have responded by emphasizing local or global symbols (or neither) in their communication strategies. These strategies have been characterized by the concepts of local consumer culture positioning (LCCP) versus global consumer culture positioning (GCCP). Given the prevalence of GCCP and LCCP, it is important to understand the psychological drivers underlying the preference for one positioning strategy over the other. Though limited, extant research has identified some predictors of preference for GCCP/LCCP—specifically, global identity and the personality traits of agreeableness and openness to change as well as consumer world-mindedness and consumer ethnocentrism (Nijssen and Douglas 2011). These phenomena could be adequately comprehended by an appreciable understanding of the role of the consumer's basic motivation and self-regulation strategy (i.e., regulatory focus) and the consumer's Global Consumption Orientation (GCO) (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra 2006). Regulatory focus theory is a theory of motivation and self-regulation that has gained significant prominence in consumer research because of its ability to explain a variety of consumer decision behaviours. According to regulatory focus theory, consumers vary in how they view their goals and adopt different ways to try to achieve these goals (Brockner, Higgins, and Low 2004). Specifically, regulatory focus theory posits two separate regulatory orientations, promotion and prevention focus, that consumers adopt during goal pursuit.

A promotion focus emphasizes hopes, accomplishments, and advancement needs. In this focus, goals are viewed as ideals, and there is a strategic concern with approaching gains and avoiding non-gains. In contrast, prevention focus emphasizes safety, responsibility, and security needs. Goals are viewed as "oughts," and there is a strategic concern with approaching non-losses and avoiding losses (Crowe and Higgins 1997). Researchers have found the regulatory focus to influence consumer behaviour in a meaningful way concerning attitude toward a brand (Keller 2006), willingness to pay, response to persuasive messages, and attitude toward pricing (Lee, Choi, and Li 2014). Extending recent research, which has found that individual values are an important

underlying motivational structure driving GCO it is suggestive therefore that a person's regulatory focus may influence GCO (Steenkamp and DeJong 2010).

According to Westjohn, et al., (2016), a unique and novel perspective of GCO and global versus local positioning strategy by introducing the concept of regulatory focus as an important motivational antecedent. While showing important cross-cultural relationships between regulatory focus, GCO, and global positioning strategy, it was observed that regulatory focus is also a situational variable, influenced by marketing strategy, which has influences on consumer behaviour that are robust across very different cultures (Aaker and Lee 2001). For example, earlier research has shown that promotion-focused processing can be situation activated through such mechanisms as prompting consumers to think about accomplishments and growth (Pham and Chang 2010), framing simple messages around aspirations and ideals, or even free product sampling (Wadhwa, Shiv, and Nowlis 2008). According to Westjohn et al., (2016), their study demonstrates this situational activation and show that promotion focus positively influences Global Consumption Orientation and preference for Global Consumer Culture Positioning. The concept of global consumer culture is associated with a collection of common signs and symbols (e.g. brands) that are understood and recognised by significant numbers of consumers in urban markets around the world. International advertising is a powerful driving force of this evolving phenomenon (Nijssen, et al., 2011). However, scholars have suggested that more comprehensive theoretical frameworks are needed to better understand international advertising in the global environment because Global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) and perceived brand globalness (PBG) represent two important constructs for studying international advertising in the context of global consumer culture (Akaka, et al., 2010).

Alden et al. (1999) recognised the emergence of GCCP and argue that brand positioning strategies across cultural borders parallel the development of the global market. They call these strategies global consumer culture positioning (GCCP), foreign consumer culture positioning (FCCP) and local consumer culture positioning (LCCP). GCCP as a consumer culture or product positioning is defined as a strategy that 'identifies the brand as a symbol of a given global culture' (Alden et al. 1999, p. 77). This strategy can be seen in advertisements that suggest that consumers around the world use a product or brand, as well as those that reflect universal values (e.g. peace) or markets (e.g. youth). GCCP is distinguished from FCCP, which positions the brand as symbolic of specific foreign consumer culture, and LCCP, which associates the brand with local cultural meanings (Gammoh, et al., 2011). Gammoh et al., 2011 suggested that the positioning strategies of LCCP and GCCP are intended to influence brand value in an increasingly globalized market.

Wallendorf & Reilly, (1983) opined that their research results supported the presence of the GCCP, LCCP, and FCCP strategies in brand advertising from multiple countries and, as potential future research. However, the potential contribution of GCCP, FCCP, and LCCP positioning strategies to brand performance would depend on consumers' responses to such brand positioning strategies (Akaka & Alden, 2010). The effectiveness of such brand positioning strategies is believed to be driven by individual consumer differences (Akaka & Alden 2010). Yet the concept of globalization and its effects on consumer culture have not been without debate. The classic perspective is one that all cultures are converging onto a single set of preferences (Levitt 1983). Recent ideas or concepts regard globalization as having progressed to the point at which many macro-level systems and institutions have become largely integrated, but the effects of the integrations on consumer culture are unknown or uncertain (Merz, He, and Alden 2008). Alternatively, some have suggested that global consumer culture has emerged, and it is increasingly becoming distinct from other national or local cultures (Cleveland & Laroche 2007). Thus, global consumer culture is not one converging global culture with similar values, attitudes, and beliefs; rather, it is limited to the consumption domain and consumption of experiences that signify participation in global culture to the consumer. The global availability of many multinational brands itself implies the emergence of global consumer culture. Global Consumer Culture Positioning strategy is defined as "one that identifies the brand as a symbol of a given global culture – for example, the post-second world war, cosmopolitan segment" (Alden et al., 1999, p. 77).

1.4 Consumer decisions

McCracken, (1993), explains that one factor that influences GCCP principally is the advertising process. The advertising process through which this occurs is termed "meaning transfer" in which the brand is associated with other signs that reflect this cultural orientation. Robertson's definition of globalization as the "crystallization of the world as a single place" and "the emergence of the global human condition" (Robertson, 1987, p. 23) was used by Alden et al. (1999) in expressing his opinion that "advertising featuring the idea that consumers all over the world consume a particular brand that appeals to certain human universals or might invest in the brand with the cultural meaning of being a conduit to feeling at one with global culture. One of the well-known examples the authors used to illustrate the GCCP is the advertisement by Benetton "The United Colors of Benetton" emphasizing the unity of mankind (Gammoh, et al., 2011). The LCCP strategy defined by Alden et al. (1999, p. 77), as "a strategy that associates the brand with local cultural

meanings, reflects the local culture's norms and identities, is portrayed as consumed by local people in the national culture, and/or is depicted as locally produced for local people", for examples, advertisements that position a brand to the way of life of a particular society or country – Chevy trucks and Dr Pepper soft drinks positioned in the US advertising as part of the American way of life (Sheth, et al., 2009).

The major bases used for consumer culture positioning are language, aesthetic styles, and story themes (Hoyer & Lee, 1993). Generally, the use of the English language in advertisements conveys modernism and internationalism to many consumers, since it is the primary language of international business, the mass media, and the internet (Allen, 2002). Thus, the use of English (used globally) conveys a GCCP identity. A spokesperson who is recognized as part of a global culture (e.g. Michael Jordan) can give a brand a more global image (Westjohn, et al., 2016). Similarly, an Indian locally known spokesperson in an ad promoting curry powder aired in India will convey a local image. A storyline employing a young executive driving a Mercedes advertising the image of success will convey a GCCP identity when aired in the USA, Malaysia or Jordan, (Gammoh et. Al., 2011) while a story-line about the life of a samurai aired in Japan will be associated with a local culture (LCCP). The question posed therefore is whether the perceived non-localness of a brand impact on consumer evaluation of a brand, and the likelihood to patronize.

According to Shocker et al. (1994) and Schmidt, (1997) "perceived brand globalness creates consumer perceptions of brand superiority and, thus, preference for global brands even when quality and value are not objectively superior" (Zsomer and Altaras, 2008, p. 5). Batra et al. (2000) found a direct relationship between the perceived non-localness of a brand and attitude toward the brand. A study by Penaloza, (2001) investigating consumers from the USA and South Korea found that perceived brand globalness is positively related to both perceived brand quality and prestige, and resulting from this relationship, to the likelihood of a brand purchase. Holt et al. (2004) found that quality explained on average 44 per cent of brand preferences, lending further support that perceived quality has a significant direct association with global brand preference and concluded that existing research findings tend to support the positive relationship between the perceived globality of a brand and overall consumer attitudinal responses to the brand (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

These findings reveal that consumer evaluations (measured in terms of brand attitude, purchase intentions, word of mouth, and brand prestige) of a new brand when global positioning is used will be higher than when local positioning is used. Furthermore, according to Robertson, (1992)

previous research suggests that consumer dispositional characteristics influence their global brand attitude and preference which focus on one individual difference variable – belief in global citizenship (BGC). Belief in global citizenship is defined by Strizhakova et al. (2008) as “the belief that global brands create an imagined global identity that a person shares with likeminded people” (p. 59). There is the argument that global brands as they become part of consumers’ daily life create global communities and link their values through their shared references (Alden et al., 1999; Holt et al., 2004; Steenkamp et al., 2003). Alden et. Al., (1999) as well as Holt et al., (2004) and Steenkamp et al., (2003), showed in their researches that global brands are central to consumers’ global citizenship beliefs and that they are preferred across product categories. More specifically, consumers with high levels of belief in global citizenship perceive themselves as less local and more international and tend to have a positive predisposition toward globally perceived products (Strizhakova et al., 2008). As such, they would be more responsive to global consumer culture positioning strategies and, thus, be more likely to positively evaluate brands they perceive to be global.

Secondly, consumer belief in global citizenship will moderate the influence of the brand positioning strategies on consumer evaluations of a new brand (Sherry, 1991). Another factor is increased exposure and openness to other countries and cultures which has also aroused interest in the concepts of cosmopolitanism and consumer world-mindedness. Cosmopolitans are expatriates that adapt to the lifestyle and mores of another country or culture without wholly abandoning their own (Thompson and Tambyah 1999), or people who view themselves as “citizens of the world” (Beckmann et al. 2001). World-minded consumers also have a genuine interest in and openness to products and brands from other parts of the world and are more likely than other consumers to experiment with products from other cultures (Anderson, 1986). Given the increasing interest in lifestyles, ideas, and behaviour patterns in other countries (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos 2009), an important question is the extent to which these trends influence attitudes toward product and brand positioning in advertisements and the extent to which these reflect a specific country image, whether of the domestic market or a foreign market versus a global culture.

Although an increasing number of multinationals are moving toward a greater emphasis on global branding, it has been pointed out that the number of global brands is relatively limited and that the major proportion of brands are local brands (Hollis 2008). Because global brands are viewed as having more power, higher quality, and a stronger image than local brands understanding how or when a brand is or might be positioned as a global versus local brand is an important consideration (Nijssen, et al., 2011). Also, although the impact of consumer world-mindedness on consumer

attitudes, choice, and purchase behaviour has been examined (Cleveland, Laroche, and Papadopoulos 2009). This orientation has not been studied concerning attitudes to advertising and, in particular, the use of a global versus foreign versus local product positioning (Nijssen and Douglas 2008). Furthermore, little is known about the interaction between consumer ethnocentrism and world-mindedness on brand and advertisement evaluations or of the influence of other contingencies, such as a person's international travel experience (Nijssen, et al., 2011).

1.5 Consumer culture in Estonia

Towards the end of the 1980s, a western consumer culture started to develop in Estonia. The 1990s saw a rapid influx of new cultural forms, such as advertising, branding and recreational shopping. Volumes of consumption increased, and by 2006 the Estonian Eurostat Index of Actual Individual Consumption had reached the level of 65, compared to an EU 27 average of 100 (Svennebye 2008). Today's consumer culture in Estonia has reached a certain stage of maturity; it is no longer eagerly aspiring to re-Westernization as it was in the early 1990s. By the mid-1990s, a turn towards aestheticization, post-materialism and increasing sophistication of consumer culture could be observed (Keller 2004). On the one hand, consumers are offered a range of possibilities of symbolic consumption-oriented at lifestyle and identity-building that may result in the successful re-appropriation of objects by subjects, and genuine self-actualization and self-expression through material culture, as described by Miller (1987). On the other hand, consumers face many different scarcities today – based on a lack of money, speciality goods or quality of service or on a breadth of choice – which are primarily perceived as private matters.

This, in turn, may at times cause strong disappointment and dissatisfaction, which results in indifference and estrangement (Kalmus, et al., 2009). According to Godwin et al, (2008), proceeding from the above, one of the central building blocks of their study is consumerism as a phenomenon. They operationalized it in their research by drawing on Bauman (1992, p. 223), who claims that consumerism means 'manipulation of signs for various ends' and 'production, desire and consumption of "symbolic goods"'. Though the determination of which consumption practices are more symbolic than others is subjective. However, their index of consumerism which is comprised of practices that consider more meaningful and revealing in the Estonian context, has proved to have a considerable explanatory force, as an earlier research has demonstrated. Also, Lauristin (2004) has shown that the Estonian people's subjective self-positioning on the social ladder is directly associated with their levels of consumerism (Willis, 1990).

Consumer culture in today's transformational Estonia must be analyzed against the background of the Soviet heritage. It still powerfully occupies the memories of the older generations and its disappearance explains, at times, the contrasting values, practices and orientations of the younger generations (Keller & Vihalemm 2005). The Soviet time was characterized by a shortage of goods and a forced homogeneity of lifestyle. However, the scarcity was, to a large extent, experienced collectively. The inability to consume like people did on Finnish TV, regularly watched in northern Estonia, was not a private failure; instead, the state was to blame. Many current portrayals of the consumer culture of the 1960s–1980s show it through the prism of a desire for freedom and consumer sovereignty, which embodied a mundane form of civic freedom (Kalmus, et al., 2009). Despite all its deficiencies, the Soviet consumer culture is often represented in the accounts of the elderly as a time of solidarity and a more respectful relationship between consumers and things, subjects and objects. Since there was no market economy-based cycle of fashions and quick obsolescence of things, there was less waste and 'colorful cheap trash'. Thus, people were, either consciously or unconsciously, 'sustainable' in their everyday consumption practices (Alden, et al., 1999)

1.6 Consumer culture in Iran

Consumer culture as a way of expressing and forming identities is a strongly contested practice in Iran (Sadjed, 2016). This is largely because Iran is an Islamic state and modernism with Western lifestyle is in contradiction with the Islamic religion (Sadjed, 2016). Thus, understanding the consumer culture in Iran requires understanding the political history because the history of consumer culture in Iran is strongly linked to the political history. The Ancient Iranian consumption practice was derived from fixed social positions assigned by birth (McKendrick 1985: 78; Sadjed 2016). However, the extension of consumption practices to different social strata has challenged the status quo – albeit far from being an uncontested or peaceful process – in the long run contained a “democratisation of desire” (Leach 1993, Williams 199)

In the twentieth century during the era of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (in office from 1941 – 1979), Iran experienced massive reforms and liberalization policies which brought about economic growth and new consumer culture heavily influenced by European, and later, American models (Sadjed, 2016). “The Shah aimed at importing the lifestyle of the European upper middle and upper class by enforcing upon the Iranian society imitations of what he considered as modern. The project of crafting a modern nation promoted education and modern science through the

construction of hospitals and schools” (Sadjed, 2016 pp. 5). The new project of modernity did not alleviate the class differences nor enhance the status of lower classes, it mainly attracted the upper classes that were able to afford the new lifestyle and economic opportunities while the growing number of the urban poor were increasingly exposed to the state’s law and order policy without benefits.

This led to the Islamic revolution in 1979 changing drastically the identity politics and consumption in Iran. The revolution was aimed at overthrowing and reframing the notion of modernity established by the previous regime, however, many of the symbolic associations of modernity persist (Sadjed, 2016). Even though an open and overly excessive display of Western lifestyles is restricted in Iran, European and American brands and lifestyles are used to demonstrate wealth, good taste, and a cultivated self – in other words, a form of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1985). Also, the post-revolutionary regime has encouraged the development of tastes and lifestyles that include norms expected of a devout Muslim. This has in the process, not countered modernity as was expected, but has an association of Western symbols with Islamic culture; The Islamic Republic strives to create a ‘modernity’ that encapsulates the signs of Islamic life (Adelkhah 1999).

The consumption pattern of Iran today is that of either ‘conflict’ or ‘merger’ of Western modernity and Islam. Shopping has become a near obsessive ritual for young people, and especially women, who have now turned to buying beauty products and high-end western brands to fill in the void of entertainment options and to “rebel “against the array of restrictions they are subjected to. In the words of Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, “if the Iranians had their way, they’d be wearing blue jeans, they’d have Western music, they’d have free elections” (BBC 2013; Sadjed 2016). The Iranians responded by posting pictures of themselves via Twitter wearing blue jeans and showing their iPads – the latter displaying a playlist with ‘Western music’ (Guardian 2013; Sadjed, 2016).

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter defines the methods employed for the research work. It is expected to build up understanding of the outcomes presented in the data collection and analysis stage in the chapter four. In this chapter the subtitles discussed are research design, population and sampling, instruments, data collection and analysis

2.1 Research Design

Qualitative research design was used in this research with a focus group interview and personal observations. A mini focus group interview was conducted by the researcher for a group of women from Iran who currently live in Estonia. This method was employed since it allows interviewees to provide honest answers without any influence from the researcher who is the conductor of the discussion (Parahoo, 2014). This therefore ensured fairness of data. This method also enabled each respondent to express themselves or react to concerns that another interviewee may have or raise regarding their responses to specific questions or issues.

The researcher used an interview guide in conducting the focus group interview. The guide was made up of open-ended questions, targeted to respond accurately and adequately to the questions raised in the statement of problem. This will go a long way to enable the researcher to attain the purpose of the study.

2. 2 Sample and Sampling

This study seeks to investigate consumer culture formation among Iranian female students in Estonia. Iranian female students as international students can be considered as a smaller segment within a bigger market which may have different characteristics and consumption criteria. Also, these interviewees are from the same country as the researcher with a familiar culture and background having moved to another culture or environment for their studies. The population for the study is made up of five women from Iran. The data for the study was collected from these five women in a mini focus group interview. This category of people selected for the population was most appropriate for the realization of the purpose of the study. The researcher chose five women from Iran because the study seeks to investigate consumer culture from a group of people from a cultural background who find themselves in a different environment. From this population,

the researcher was able to collect the right information with regards to how the consumer culture of each of the respondents have been formed in a new environment. The purposive sampling method was employed for this study. Sampling of the respondents was based on various decisive factors including people with expert knowledge of the research issue who have the capacity and the willingness to participate in the research. Due to this, as stated earlier, five women who have lived and been in Estonia for not less than three years were sampled.

The researcher is certain that the above group of people sampled have adequate and needed information for the research process and therefore are the most appropriate sample for this study.

2.3 Data collection

The guide employed for the collection of data for this research work was a focus group interview and personal observations. The mini focus group interview saved time because all the respondents sat by a round table with the researcher to have a discussion on the subject. Though the researcher used an interview guide to moderate the discussion, there was a comprehensive explanation to each question by the interviewees. This is because each question the researcher asked went to all the interviewees at the same time and each responded appropriately without confusions and much demands or distraction from the other interviewees. This method of gathering data saved so much time than normal individual interviews would have saved. This is because the data that would have been gathered from the five ladies at different times and at different locations was gathered at one point within few hours. This method also gave the respondents the privilege to hear for themselves different opinions on an issue which differ from their individual experience. This however did not in any way distract their honest opinion or get them confused. Rather they had the opportunity to discover other ways different people had their consumer culture formed. Participants were therefore able to answer within few minutes to allow the other participants to also voice their stance and opinion on specific issues. This reduced the rate of distraction and deviation from the response a question demanded since the questions defined the area of investigation for respondents to answer accordingly.

Also, in this type of interview, structured questions were asked together with open-ended ones (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999). This method was appropriate because it provided the researcher with guideline questions and freedom to the participants for more insightful information indispensable to the research.

The interview guide for the focus group discussion was in six sections. The first section was an introductory section which was used to collect general data on the backgrounds and values and purchasing behaviour of the respondents. The second section was used to collect data on the consumer cultural perspectives of the citizens of the country of the respondents. This section included questions regarding how people in the country of the respondents responded to buying or consuming new products; how they respond to advertisement or celebrity recommendation; as well as whether their presence in an unfamiliar culture has changed their way of shopping in a new environment.

The third section was used to collect data on the all factors that affected their consumer culture formation. This section therefore asked questions such as whether the respondents had lived in other countries apart from their home country and Estonia. This was to enable the researcher find out whether there were differences in the way people shop in their home country and Estonia.

The fourth section focused on the processes they had gone through prior to the formation of their consumption culture. This section gathered data on the various experiences the respondents had which had contributed to the formation of their culture as consumers. The fifth section gathered data on the demographics of the respondents. Thus, this section gathered data on the general consumption history and behaviour of the respondents; whether income determined their preferences and whether friends and family had any influence on what they consumed. The sixth section was a summary of the discussion. It gathered data on the final words of the respondents on the subject under discussion. Thus, a summary of their consumption experience and for that matter their consumption culture.

2. 4 Data analysis

Direct approach to qualitative analysis was used to aid the uncovering and understanding of the big picture and to use the data gathered to describe the phenomenon on the topical basis and what it means. The data analysis relied on the data gathered from the mini focus group discussion, moderator's personal observation of the consumer culture of international students in Estonia and the perspective of consumer culture theory. The primary source of the data included the focus group interview which was more of a round table discussion. Furthermore, the author analyses the gathered data from the perspective of consumer culture theory as discussed in the literature above.

For the essence of anonymity, interviewees would be labelled as Interviewee A, Interviewee B, Interviewee C, Interviewee D and Interviewee E respectively.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The objective of this research is to investigate the consumer culture formation among Iranian female students in Estonia: consumer cultural perspectives, predominant consumption culture, the factors that influence their consumption culture, the processes or experiences that aided the reformation and reshaping of the consumption behavior and how their consumption behavior has changed since moving to Estonia. The preceding chapter discussed the data collection method, ie the mini focus group. This chapter analysis the data collected using the direct approach to qualitative analysis.

3.1 Consumer cultural perspective

In order to comprehend the consumer culture predominant among interviewees, two main questions were asked by the interviewer to solicit the ideas and experiences of interviewees with regards to the predominant culture among Iranians. One of the questions focused on as individuals and the second centered on Iran where they all come from.

The prime phase of the qualitative content analysis provided us with three new categories for recognizing consumer culture: (1) (the use of) superlatives, (2) passion (in the speaker's tone), and (3) distinction. Though the third of these categories is consistent with previous research, the first two are new to scholarship in the field (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al, 2014). The author used these categories as criteria that enabled us to identify the varied cultural perspectives and the predominant culture among the interviewees which helped us comprehend easily, the factors that influence consumer decision. It also aided us to understand the process of consumer culture formation and the change in consumer behaviour. The features that characterize the speech of the interviewees with various consumer cultural perspective are explained as follows:

Superlatives: This is the use of superlatives and presence of an obviously high emotional charge (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al, 2014). The interviewees who fall into this category tend to use superlatives and keep returning to the topic of their specific consumer cultural perspective, thus their predominant culture without the interviewer necessarily making request for it. They speak of their consumer cultural perspective, thus their predominant culture in a passionate and emotional way:

So why do I buy things? Okay yeah. I don't spend money on brands and stuff much. I don't care about it. But then at some point I realized that also very cheap things don't last much. So, I'm trying to find that middle ground of having good quality but then not paying for the name (brand) but maybe for very essential stuff, I go for bigger names just because I feel that maybe the quality is better. But not as like fashion brands like maybe I don't know if I'm buying. So, I was thinking to buy a winter coat, so I was thinking well maybe I should spend two or three hundred euros because it will last more, and it will be more waterproof and everything. So yeah something in the middle. To some extent, I have a theory that if it's like very low price there is something wrong with it I guess. But if it's too expensive also it doesn't say that it is better quality than something that is middle price. So, if it's a shoe I think you can find a really good shoe under 200 euros already which is like it will last forever. But if you buy something more than that it's already for brand but if you want to buy, I don't know Chanel or some Gucci something, I think it's much more than that, so for quality I think it is still expensive but not that much. (Interviewee C)

I don't look for a brand or even high-quality dresses because I know that finally I will use them just for six months or one year. I know that they will be old and maybe six months later. I don't like to use it anymore, so I don't like to pay more for these products. But the thing that I would like to spend more on is for the electrical devices like tablets or laptops because I know that I will use them more than five years more than 6 years, so I like to spend more money on them but about dresses this is not important for me. (Interviewee A)

In these examples, the use of words like 'really, better' or 'classy' 'attractive', 'perfectly', 'unique' etc. stands out, conveying an emotion and implying that the interviewee is trying to impress the person he or she is speaking to.

Passion: The interviewees falling into this category seemed to need to speak about the predominant culture in the new country where they live as perceived by each of them (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al, 2014). The interviewees spoke about the comfort and convenience of the consumer culture in Estonia.

That the environment here really like affected me in a way that I had to take care of myself and health and back then I was smoking and drinking but right now I'm not that much okay. Once in a while yes but I'm not really spending money on that (Interviewee B)

Yeah, the environment here is so great. Everyone is exercising and running on the street while you're going toward your destination, I see people and I'm like Oh my God what am I doing I have to practice.

So, in Iran people were like all the time carrying this luxurious stuff, luxurious cars and you know you needed to be presentable when you are with them. It was such a pressure like every party or gathering you need to be good you need to look good your hair your makeup your whatever it is. So that's why people in Iran spend most of their money on their look and how they look. I don't know but here in Estonia, it's not that important. So I'm really spending less money on this part of my life.

Distinction: Positive distinction of the selected consumer culture compared to the culture in a different place. Or the consumer culture perspective of one interviewee compared to that of another (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al, 2014). The qualitative approach enables us to see how emotionally the comparison is done and examine the interviewees' choice of words.

- *There are more gatherings like you see people so much more but here we just go to work and come back home, there is no occasion to dress up that much. Yeah, in Iran life is a lot more festive than Estonia. You go out a lot. And of course, this limitation of hijab when you are in public and I think people satisfy these needs with just being like fashionable. Even with the hijab you know like they try to be colourful, and so they try to present themselves when they are in the private parties but not so in Estonia. So that's how it looks like. I all the time call Tehran, like a small New York because it's like the way people dress or like do wherever they are, I am like wow it's interesting. But here people are like just comfier and you know like I've seen people like wearing one clothes (Interviewee B)*

The next section of this paper analyses the interviews with the five Iranian female students that we conducted in a focus group interview. Investigating in depth the journey of the consumer from their predominant consumer culture from their background, in Iran to the formation of changes in their consumer behaviour in Estonia.

3.2 Predominant culture among interviewees

In this section we analyse the manner the interviewees describe the various consumer culture that is predominant amongs them. It is evident that they grew up within a specific cultural certain despite the consumer culture that was predominant in their various immediate backgrounds. We

would therefore examine the culture of consumption among the individual interviewees and how it relates or contradicts the consumer culture in their home country. We would also analyse the consumer culture predominant among the interviewees since their stay in Estonia and how it relates or contradicts the consumer culture in Estonia as perceived or observed by the interviewees and as described through literature by scholarly work.

3.2.1 Predominant culture in Iran

Almost all the interviewees while in Iran had the culture of shopping. They went shopping either for stuffs for parties (clothes, cosmetics, footwear etc.) others went shopping for various things for their matrimonial homes (food, baby stuffs).

According to an article by BBC (2013) and Sadjed (2016), it was explained that the consumption pattern of Iran in modern time is that of either ‘conflict’ or ‘merger’ of Western modernity and Islam. Shopping has become a near obsessive ritual for young people, and especially women, who have now turned to buying beauty products and high-end western brands to fill in the void of entertainment options and to “rebel” against the array of restrictions they are subjected to. In the words of Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, “if the Iranians had their way, they’d be wearing blue jeans, they’d have Western music, they’d have free elections” (BBC 2013; Sadjed 2016). According to literature, the predominant culture in Iran in modern time is shopping and the kind of shopping is that kind of products akin to western modernity. Here, we analysed the data to find out whether predominant culture in Iran is as suggested by the literature or in contradiction to the suggestion by the literature. We also analyzed how this data serves as an important information to businesses to know the products that would meet consumption demands and to help companies to avoid unnecessary losses.

Actually, my main interests are watching movies and partying with friends. I spend my money on buying stuffs for the party (cosmetics, clothes and makeup) and my time and energy partying and watching movies.” (Interviewee A)

When I was in Iran I used to be a very festive and also a party girl too. I therefore spent my money buying stuffs for partying. I also liked to drink and smoking and therefore I spent money on those things (Interviewee B)

My interests are cats, cosmetics and makeup. I really like makeup. And so if I have to pay for them, I don’t mind how much it is I will pay. Also if my cats have some health problem or something but they generally didn’t have that much cost. I also spent money on my health, I had a lot of dental problems so I spend a lot of money on that.” (Interviewee C)

When I was in Iran I had just started my marital life and the culture was that women do not work and that they didn't need to care about money. All they needed to do was to spend their time going to GYM, shopping, going to beauty salons and so on. And so many women around me lived in such a way... (Interviewee E)

The interviewees gave the impression that the kind of things they shopped for had a form of relation with modernism. Thus, though we know that Iran is an Islamic nation which has certain beliefs and practices with regards to dressing and even food, the interviewees seemed to be democratic in their consumption culture. According to Sadjed, (2016), consumer culture as a way of expressing and forming identities is a strongly contested practice in Iran. He explains that this is largely because Iran is an Islamic state and modernism with Western lifestyle is in contradiction with the Islamic religion (Sadjed, 2016).

We observed that some of the things interviewees stated that they shopped for were either expensive/extravagant or had normal price western brands. Thus, American and European brands.

I prefer not to buy anything but brands. I mean I prefer to buy more expensive and really fashionable things because that is how my husband also wanted it. I don't want to have for example several t-shirts but all of them are. Three euros-three euros but I want to have one T-shirt that is 15 euros for example. (Interviewee E)

Another aspect of predominant culture in Iran is the manner of consumption or how people choose what to purchase, especially new products. When we tried to find out how people in Iran in general respond to buying or consuming new products. We found out that some people in Iran patronize new products based on adverts, packaging, recommendation; either by reviews or referrals, their needs and price of the products. However predominantly, in Iran, people purchase new products or shop based on advertisement which leads to the popularity of a product which therefore leads to a product becoming a product that is trending for which most people would want to patronise to join the trend. Thus, when a product is trending then people turn to choose to purchase the product.

In my opinion both of them play a role in shopping but I think mostly advertising because in my experience advertising gives a legal profile to the products in my country for example I remember when people were looking for a slim peel, if they take the advertisement in TV shows or in big billboard in highways then it was healthy and didn't have any side effect and it's under the surveillance of that government. So, I think advertising can play a key role and also recommendations. I think when people need something first they look for advertising and then search about their reviews and commendations of other people. (Interviewee A).

In my region it's not recommendation. It's like Something is in fashion or has become eminent and everybody just gets it. Yeah it's not that wow like one person knows that's good and recommends it but it's some waves of mode and fashion and then suddenly it trends.
(Interviewee C)

I really don't mind spending money travelling and in Iran I never travelled alone. Most of the time maybe for university things. However, in Iran traveling to different cities is really difficult and very expensive. Also in Iran I was really worried about other people's thinking.
(Interviewee D)

Well I don't like to be similar to others, I think people in Iran don't care. You know when something is in fashion you can see it in every house. And I guess this is something that is completely related to advertisement not only the culture or let's say advertisement and recommendation.” (Interviewee E)

Others however however revealed that they didn't like to join the trend or be like others and so didn't purchase products that were trending even when their need was in a similar direction. They rather chose to purchase products based on their needs and would prefer an alternative product to a trending product.

From my side it was always like this that I I've always cared about my appearance and I buy things that I need and not things that are trending. I mean I really want to buy the things that I need and though I wanted them to be brands I didn't want the one's that like it was trending everyone is buying. And it may happen that I spend let's say two months searching for my suitable bag or dress that I really like and the style and colour that I wanted it to be. (Interviewee E)

From the above the interviewee gave their honest opinions with regards to the consumer culture in Iran with regards to the things they would spend their money to acquire and also how people in Iran purchased certain products. From their presentation, it is clear that they liked shopping. It is also clear that sometimes the things they go shopping are things that are trending. Probably as a result of the fame of the product out of publicity.

3.2.2 Predominant culture in Estonia

It is obvious that the interviewees are Iranians who currently reside in Estonia as a result of their education. We therefore analyzed the predominant culture in Estonia. Svennebye, (2008), briefly described the consumer culture in Estonia that towards the end of the 1980s, a western consumer culture started to develop in Estonia. The 1990s saw a rapid influx of new cultural forms, such as advertising, branding and recreational shopping. Volumes of consumption increased, and by 2006

the Estonian Eurostat Index of Actual Individual Consumption had reached the level of 65, compared to an EU 27 average of 100 (Svennebye 2008). Today's consumer culture in Estonia has reached a certain stage of maturity; it is no longer eagerly aspiring to re-Westernization as it was in the early 1990s. By the mid-1990s, a turn towards aestheticization, post-materialism and increasing sophistication of consumer culture could be observed (Keller 2004). On the one hand, consumers are offered a range of possibilities of symbolic consumption-oriented at lifestyle and identity-building that may result in the successful re-appropriation of objects by subjects, and genuine self-actualization and self-expression through material culture, as described by Miller (1987).

The above identifies the consumer culture of the people in Estonia to be shopping just as in Iran. On the other hand, however, the revolution in the consumer culture in recent times has led to a focus on identity-building as well. We analysed this assertion with the responses of our interviewees who though Iranians, are currently resident in Estonia. We found out that some of our interviewees could identify with this through their interest in shopping for parties as well as pursuing goals while others indicated that coming to stay in Estonia has aided them to make the decision to focus on identity/personality building and therefore currently, they have less time for shopping as a result of their limited time for partying.

Here in Estonia also, my main interests are spending time and money for buying stuff which I use for attending parties with friends and family in my free time every weekend. I go to parties every weekend. So, the most important things in my life are Family and friends and pursuing my goals and what I really don't care about is traditional customs and the opinions of other people (Interviewee A)

When I was in Iran, I used to be a very festive and a party girl but since then when I just moved in here (Estonia) three years ago, I started to just think about developing myself. And so all the time I'm working studying or doing something else and so here the amount of partying really decreased so much I'm really short of time so in this field like lifestyle I would say yeah it has been changed but in Iran the thing is I didn't pay for partying or going to parties. And here we have to pay for everything. Although here I'm doing less partying or stuff but I'm spending more because I need to pay for myself here in Estonia. Yeah and I'm spending my time only for self-development. I go to GYM. I didn't go to GYM when I was in Iran. (Interviewee B)

I've always liked cats, cosmetics and makeup and so here in Estonia, I really like cats, cosmetics and make up. I like to spend on these and if the cats have some health problem or something though I don't really like going out, except for meals or for socialization (Interviewee C).

The things that I really don't mind spending money on is travelling. And here in Estonia because I have a lot of opportunities and ease to traveling; everything is close to me, kinds of different countries. Traveling is much easier compared to Iran I think, even in Iran traveling to different cities is difficult but here you just buy a ticket and go it's completely easy and I think this is very good change that I have here. Also, here in Estonia I really don't care what other people think about me. I do just have fun and just the things that I think is good for me. I never care honestly about others and this is another change that I found here because in Iran I was really worried about other people's thinking (Interviewee D)

From the above data it is evident that in Iran most of them would spend their money shopping for cosmetics, dresses, bags and makeup. Few would spend shopping for cats and medication both for self and cats and very few would spend on travelling while in Iran. Similarly, in Estonia, most of them would spend their money shopping for cosmetics, dresses, bags and makeup. Few would spend shopping for cats and medication both for self and cats. It is however evident that travelling in Estonia is easy and less expensive. It is also evident that more people would spend on normal priced commodities like dresses, cosmetics and makeup and fewer people would spend much on brand products. These informs companies, for instance an importing company the kinds of products to purchase.

Since travelling to various places is easy, less expensive and more appealing, it is likely many people who come to Estonia would develop a passion for traveling and companies can think of investing in transportation in Estonia. Either into acquiring buses or trains or investing into sales of tickets.

3.3 Factors Influencing consumer culture

McCracken, (1993), explains that one factor that influences GCCP principally is the advertising process. The advertising process through which this occurs is termed "meaning transfer" in which the brand is associated with other signs that reflect this cultural orientation. Robertson's definition

of globalization as the "crystallization of the world as a single place" and "the emergence of the global human condition" (Robertson, 1987, p. 23) was used by Alden et al. (1999) in expressing his opinion that "advertising featuring the idea that consumers all over the world consume a particular brand that appeals to certain human universals or might invest in the brand with the cultural meaning of being a conduit to feeling at one with global culture. One of the well-known examples the authors used to illustrate the GCCP is the advertisement by Benetton "The United Colors of Benetton" emphasizing the unity of mankind (Tse, Lee, Vertinsky, & Wehrung, 1988).

This explains that one major factor that influences consumer culture is when a commodity that appeals to a certain group of people is properly advertised for the knowledge of the people that didn't know of the commodity and made accessible to them. Logically, before a commodity gets to the stage of becoming a commodity that is trending that people are seeking to acquire it must first be from a source. Secondly, the source should have found it appealing enough to patronize it and broadcast its greatness and essence to other people of different location who don't know of the product. What some industries do is to use celebrities in adverts to affirm the product. Therefore, in analysing our data we tried to find how interviewees respond to celebrity advertisements to identify the factors that influence the consumer culture of our interviewees in consideration with the assertion by Robertson, (1987), McCracken, (1993) and Gammoah et al, (2011) about advertisement.

About the celebrity advertisements. I can say that if I really feel that having that product is really necessary for me then I will look at the advertisement and even celebrity advertisement. I however consider the price. And I don't skip the searching by myself if I cannot afford that price. And I would be sure that this product has a high quality. Then I try to find a similar product or alternative of that product. (Interviewee A)

Celebrity advertisement to me had an effect that made me feel that I needed something but I actually didn't need but now I'm mature and it doesn't affect me anymore. So therefore, I really don't follow whatever a celebrity especially on Instagram like the most famous ones like are trying to advertise because I know what is behind it. I studied business and I know all of it is just business and they do not care about society's way of thinking and how it affects people. So to me it's actually they don't have any effect on me but maybe on back of my head they have. I don't know but I don't accept it.(Interviewee B)

Uh Advertising. It depends what it is. If something that is interesting for me has the effect that I'll go and check it up see the reviews, see how it works or whatever. Like I wanted to

buy some gaming console and the other day I saw some advertising about this switch. So, I was just thinking that if there is some offer or whatever to just look it up. Also, about makeup and cosmetics that I really like and it is my hobby if I see advertising because generally they advertise new stuff. So, I see that as something new came up. So, I'll go and check it out. I also follow some of the smaller community celebrities like in the makeup world. There are some people who are famous but only for people who follow makeup. So, it's not like you won't have heard their names but they have a lot of followers in their own community. So, I follow them and if they suggest something I'll definitely go and check it out. (Interviewee C)

Honestly speaking I really don't care about the celebrity because I know my body I know what is fit for me I know which cosmetic is good for my skin. So, whatever they use it's good for them and it's good for their budgets. It's not maybe good for me. So, I really don't care about this thing.” (Interviewee D)

For me personally I know myself my style and I don't really easily get affected by celebrities because I have my budget and I know my body and I know everything that is related to me and my behavior. Only because some celebrity has worn something like fashion of a coat. It doesn't satisfy and doesn't mean it would fit me as well. Though I think these people are famous, and may not recommend bad things and may not want to fool us, I really care about my style. And if I check out the price and it's ok and shipping is free I go for it. (Interviewee E)

From the above data, three of the interviewees are not influenced by advertisement or celebrity recommendation. These interviewees stated that they know themselves adequately enough to be influenced by their needs and wants and not just the media hype, therefore though advertisement is good because it sometimes aids individuals to know where their needs or wants could be acquired and how much it costs. Two others are somehow influenced by advertisement or celebrity recommendation based on the kind of the product.

The effectiveness of such brand positioning strategies is believed to be driven by individual consumer differences (Akaka & Alden 2010). Yet the concept of globalization and its effects on consumer culture have not been without debate. The classic perspective is one that all cultures are converging onto a single set of preferences (Levitt 1983). Recent ideas or concepts regard globalization as having progressed to the point at which many macro-level systems and institutions

have become largely integrated, but the effects of the integrations on consumer culture are unknown or uncertain (Merz, He, and Alden 2008).

Another factor that influences consumer culture is the culture of a place against the individual preferences or taste of the consumer. Sometimes, the culture of a place shapes the taste and preference of consumers from their infancy even before the emergence of their consumption culture is created. Others grow to identify their actual taste and preference which sometimes may conform to the culture or religious believe of a place or contradict the culture of the place.

Here, we analysed how interviewees responded when they were asked whether their culture in Iran have any influence on their taste and preferences.

Yes. I can speak about the family parties and friend parties in my culture and in my own culture people are responsible to supply and all that stuff for guests and include food drinks all the plates and everything. But here in Estonia there is a habit that guests need to must need to bring their stuff their food and drinks to the party. And also, I can speak about the. We never in our culture. We never use reasonable plates or plastic plates, we always use the silver wears or China wears. And so even if we don't have that stuff we try to borrow them from our parents and our sisters or other members of the family. (Interviewee A)

Yes. To me it's actually more with regards to food consumption which in the back of my head I don't like and don't buy pork because in Iran we never eat pork meat. We could taste it though and I tasted it before and I don't have any religious related problem with that. (Interviewee B)

Not really, for instance in general I just think I don't feel comfortable wearing like very short clothes. Short clothes are very revealing things just because I haven't done it when I was a teenager or younger. So, it's already a habit and I'm like I don't think about it. But it's just like something that I don't feel comfortable. And the other thing is that I feel much more comfortable wearing more makeup than maybe normal people here. Or actually here in Estonia people wear a lot of make up but even when I was living in different countries I was like okay you being a bit more made up (Interviewee C)

No it didn't however I recommend that to buy used or secondhand clothes and I will still keep my habit that is not buying anything that is used. (Interviewee E)

From the above data, the culture of the Iranians influence the taste and preference of three interviewees in different ways. The first interviewee prefers to attend parties a lot because the culture requires that the organizers of the party supply everything for the guests. The second interviewee stated that the culture in Iran influenced her cuisine, thus, the kinds of food she

prepared. The third interviewee mentioned that the culture in Iran influenced her choice of clothes. Two other interviewees mentioned that the culture in Iran does not influence their taste and preference. They also had different aspects that the culture in Iran does not influence their taste and preferences. The first interviewee stated that she naturally loves the kind of clothes the culture of Iran recommends that girls/ladies should wear. This is because naturally she doesn't like short dresses which the culture frowns on. The second interviewee likes expensive (fashion brands) and the culture in Iran does not influence that taste and preference.

With these trends, a company that provides stuffs for parties would know how to supply products to avoid unnecessary losses. This can also help companies to monitor trends and the dynamics and modernity introduced into the culture and how it is likely to affect the demand of certain products.

3.4 Consumption culture formation and reshaping - processes and experiences

3.4.1 Language, styles and story themes

The main process that commences consumer culture formation and reshaping is the consumer's ability to identify products as a result of the language used to brand the product. The major bases used for consumer culture positioning are language, aesthetic styles, and story themes (Nijssen, et al., 2011). Generally, the use of the English language in advertisements conveys modernism and internationalism to many consumers, since it is the primary language of international business, the mass media, and the internet (Alden, et al., 1999). Thus, the use of English (used globally) conveys a GCCP identity. A spokesperson who is recognized as part of a global culture (e.g. Michael Jordan) can give a brand a more global image (Westjohn, et al., 2016). Similarly, an Indian locally known spokesperson in an ad promoting curry powder aired in India will convey a local image. They also discussed the absence of English translations of almost all products descriptions in the shops, the presence of price tags and vending machines.

Some of the interviewees shared their experiences on how they enter shops in Tallin to search a product to buy but to the amazement could not find any product branded or tagged in English language.

The thing that I was really stunned when I entered the shop in Tallinn was that I couldn't find a single word in English and it was really disappointing because I thought that at least one word may be similar to English so that I could read and know the name and importance of the product. Unfortunately, I had to ask different people that what does shampoo mean

in Estonian and or are there shampoos or are there conditioners or what soap. (Interviewee E)

So, I had some brands that I used to buy and then I couldn't find them here but then I got used to brand that I can find here. But I guess having like online shops that is translated because there is a lot of stuff that you can buy online but some of the websites weren't in English. But nowadays it's much better actually. So, it is fine. (Interviewee C)

These experiences of the interviewee began a process of searching for an alternative of the product. This is because they want to avoid the embarrassment of going to a shop to find a product and now having to be asking people about the product and since it seems the shops have not found it essential to position shop attendants to interpret or tell customers the meaning of certain product names and descriptions which are not in English language.

3.4.2 Experiences (Surprises and shocks)

The experiences individuals get within time in a place as a result of the various pleasing and displeasing circumstances that people encounter with regards to making purchases that meet their needs and wants also aids in the process of consumer culture formation and reshaping. The needs and wants people have in a specific place and the beautiful surprises and shocks people encounter with their attempt to acquire needs and wants are inevitable processes in the formation and reshaping of consumer culture.

To understand the processes and experiences aiding consumption culture formation and reshaping, interviewees were asked questions to that effect. Interviewees were asked questions relating to cultural shocks and to ascertain the experiences interviewees have experienced so far.

For cultural shocks, interviewees shared experiences on social events such as parties and weddings, shopping, fashion, food and formality.

One interviewee on wedding noted, she was shocked seeing a simple, less costly but super good wedding. She has always been used to expensive, complicated and luxurious weddings in Iran. On dressing to parties, one interviewee also commented that going to the party in Iran requires wearing fancy clothes to look 'extraordinary' else it's better to skip the party than go normal.

I want to refer to the gatherings or parties that we needed to go for me was shocking that they really like in Estonia people really don't pay attention that much like to be too much you know like in Iran we used to like wear so many fancy clothes and if we look like normal or whatever we prefer not to go to a party. Here they really don't care. And actually, this is what I actually got used to and I'm doing the same. So, I just feel more comfortable going out with whatever mood or whatever style I have and that's it. (Interviewee B)

So, I remember the cultural shock about food that I had the first time we went out with friends to a restaurant from university and they had the dish which I don't remember the name, but it was raw meat with raw egg on it. And so it was like minced meat and shaped like a hamburger but also on top of it as raw egg and my friend ate it and I was shocked.

(Interviewee C)

The most interesting and the most shocking experience that I encountered in Tallinn was when I saw a professor in university that wears a T-shirt yellow t shirt with a tattoo on her body and it was very shocking for me because I expected the professor to wear a suit with tie, thus to wear a very formal dress but yeah it was very shocking for me. So, I understand that they don't really care about the formal dress. They wear the dress in a way that they feel comfy about it. (Interviewee A)

Another interviewee also shared her experience on shopping stating, she has always known shopping to be bulk buying but encountered in Estonia on several occasions, people shopping in singles.

Regarding first experience, some interviewees mentioned the size of some shops and the attitude of salespersons, how different it is here in Estonia from the way it is in Iran and the influence on reshaping their shopping behavior. All these factors contributed in one way or the other in reshaping their buying culture.

The researcher proceeded to ask interviewees how they coped with the shocks and new experiences. In response to the attitude of salespersons, one interviewee commented that she has no other way than to cope with the differences, so she has learnt to go to the shop with her weeklong list of items to buy, ie. buy them in large quantity to be used for a longer period. That way, she limits her encounter with salesperson's attitude. Another interviewee also responded that the challenge with shopping meant she had to take her Estonian classes seriously, thus becoming familiar with some of the item names in Estonian.

The researcher then proceeded to understand if these experiences and processes have had any changes on their consumption behaviour. Whilst some interviewees were quick to admit that it has in one way or the other impacted their behaviour others were of the view that it has not in any way.

This information helps manufacturers and business to know how to brand their product to make it easy for new consumers to identify their product, comprehend its essence and the probability of patronage by the new consumer. People from Iran and other countries who cannot speak or read the Estonian language are surely going to travel to Estonia subsequently and continually and it is

essential that producers brand their product in a way that foreigners that come to Estonia can easily identify and relate with their product to probably enhance patronage.

Secondly, companies can take advantage of the surprises and shocks foreigners have about their products to improve their sales. Many people love adventure and so companies can do a further study into the manner that foreigners are surprised or shocked by their product to know how best to take advantage of it to improve their sales.

3.5 Changes in Consumption Behavior

Iran experienced massive reforms and liberalization policies in the 20th century which brought about economic growth and new consumer culture heavily influenced by European, and later, American models (Sadjed, 2016). As explained by Sadjed (2016), the new project by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (in office from 1941 – 1979) to import Western modernity to Iran did not help to alleviate the class differences nor enhance the status of lower classes, it mainly attracted the upper classes that were able to afford the new lifestyle and economic opportunities while the growing number of the urban poor were increasingly exposed to the state's law and order policy without benefits. This led to the Islamic revolution in 1979 changing drastically the identity politics and consumption in Iran. The revolution was aimed at overthrowing and reframing the notion of modernity established by the previous regime, however, many of the symbolic associations of modernity still persist (Sadjed, 2016). Even though an open and overly excessive display of Western lifestyles is restricted in Iran, European and American brands and lifestyles are used to demonstrate wealth, good taste, and a cultivated self – in other words, a form of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1985).

In similar fashion, towards the end of the 1980s, a western consumer culture started to develop in Estonia. The 1990s saw a rapid influx of new cultural forms, such as advertising, branding and recreational shopping. Volumes of consumption increased, and by 2006 the Estonian Eurostat Index of Actual Individual Consumption had reached the level of 65, compared to an EU 27 average of 100 (Svennebye 2008). Interviewees discussed how living in Estonia has changed their consumption behavior. The researcher put the question to interviewees how living in another country has changed their consumption behavior.

For me I think in Tallinn I think my sense of fashion changed a bit. So, I am a bit more minimalistic here. I used to be more like girly colorful skirts floral, but I think Tallinn has had some effect on my fashion choices. Um and also, I pay more for books and

entertainment here compared to Iran because I think we were used to either to just copy things without really caring about the copyright issues and or just I don't know having that well we had library you could just go and read Persian books and everything was fine but here I don't have access to that many English books so I need to buy them. (Interviewee C) my own country. I never used alcoholic stuff as much as I used here because I didn't have access to them easily but here at least four or five times in a month I will use them. And also, I use snus and it is a replacement or alternative option of a cigarette. I didn't have such a product in Iran so uh I can't say every month I spent about 200 Euros. Two for buying snus and also maybe one hundred on alcoholic stuff but I didn't have such a cost in my own country. (Interviewee A)

I used to buy lots of fresh vegetables when I was in my country. I mean every Wednesday I remember that I went to the bazaar and I bought as much as I could fresh herbs and vegetables like eggplants cucumbers and tomatoes and so on by here I have to buy some of my favorite vegetables like broccoli or let's say Mm hmm, Flower cabbage as in Frozen Form which is not my favorite but also green beans. It's not my favorite behavior but I don't have any other choices (Interviewee E)

Some interviewees who had lived in other countries apart from their home country and Estonia shared their experience living in other countries such as Germany and Italy and compared it to Estonia and how Estonia has impacted their buying behavior. One interviewee who has lived in Germany recounted that shops in Germany are always closed on Sundays, also German ladies are less stylish or fashionable with the wearing of high heels for example. Having moved back to Estonia, even though shops are opened on Sundays, she is under the wrong impression and shops on Saturdays. She has also gotten attracted to the wearing of high heels, so yes, she has experienced changes in her shopping behavior which is as a result of combination of factors including being in Estonia and having spent some time abroad in other countries. Another interviewee also shared her experience living in Italy before moving to Estonia and how those experiences have impacted her shopping behavior. She outlined the differences in weather conditions and taste for food as the observed factors contributing to changes in consumption behavior.

For example, for making some kind of our traditional food I had the challenge in finding the ingredients in Estonia and I usually buy them from Helsinki and I think if we can have more Asian or Turkish, it is OK with Turkish as well. Turkish store here which provide us with more affordable ingredients would be really good for me, at least because I am more used to the Iranian traditional food than Estonian food. So many international people are coming here and it would be really good business like if they start, because I remember

there is one store here and they say that we receive our ingredient from Germany. I said that. So, if you receive from Helsinki it would be much cheaper because in Helsinki cheaper than here. And they said that I don't know at the moment. (Interviewee D)

The researcher then proceeded to find out how friends and roommates have contributed to changing consumption behavior. Two (2) out of the five (5) interviewees confirmed to have been influenced immensely by their friends, the other interviewees admitted that any such influences might be minimal and the last member of the group was very sure no such influence has occurred. The influences from friends discussed by interviewees include being thrifty in shopping and the use of vitamin products.

The researcher probed further to identify other factors to have influenced consumption behavior. Interviewees discussed sustainable products, product recycling, variety of products and freedom. Interviewees were of the view that emphasis on sustainable products in Estonia, the desire for product recycling, availability of variety of products and the freedom to choose and consume without any restrictions have impacted positively their consumption behavior.

The change in the behaviour of consumption by consumers who enter Estonia can help industries to know the current patterns of the consumer behaviour of international students and the probable patterns of consumer culture of foreigners who enter Estonia to know how to channel production to meet consumer needs and wants. Industries that import products would also know what kinds of products to import to meet the needs and wants of consumers.

To summarize the author presents the findings as in the diagram below

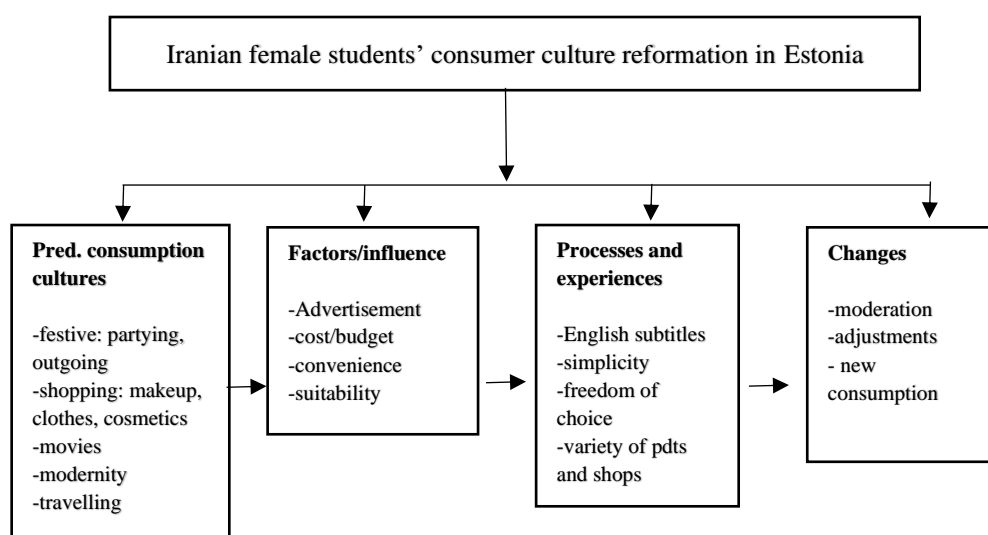


Figure 1: consumer culture reformation *Source: complemented by the author*

The author discovered from our interviewees that they are very festive and modern, ie partying and outgoing in their consumption culture. They like shopping, spending their money on

cosmetics, make-ups and clothes, likes watching movies and travelling. The factors that influence their consumption and buying behaviour is advertisement, budget or cost, convenience and suitability. Their experience in Estonia which has been a combination of shocks and discoveries, the absence of English subtitles on products, the variety of products and shopping centers and the freedom of choices has brought about changes in their consumption behaviour. Whilst on one hand they have moderated their 'expressive' consumption style, they have had to adjust their consumption to suite the products on availability. At the same time, the freedom to explore without any restrictions have exposed them to new consumption patterns.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research is to investigate consumer culture formation among Iranian Female students. The idea is to understand the predominant consumer cultures among these students, the factors that influence their consumption in Estonia, the processes or experiences that aid the reformaion and reshaping of consumption in Estonia and how their consumption behavior has changed since moving to Estonia. We noticed from research and practice that producers and distributors focus on satisfying the bigger segment of a market without paying much attention to the smaller segment. With many more international students moving to Tallinn, such a research was necessary to provide some insight to academia and industry on consumption opportunities that can be harnessed and satisfied by businesses for profit. We discussed in the literature segment of this research consumer culture theory, decision guides for consumers, consumption culture in Estonia in recent times and the evolution of consumer culture in Iran. The researcher chose five Iranian female students as her reference point for the research and adopted the qualitative approach to the analysis.

It was observed from the research that Iran and Estonia both have a sense of taste for Western modernity but differences in freedom of expression. Whilst Estonia has the freedom of expression for taste and fashion, expressing one's taste and fashion in Iran is restricted. Ironically, Iranian ladies are more expressive and festive of fashion, colour, taste and brands. Though Estonia is also known for taste and brands, it is done in moderation. With the presence of top brands, easy to find shops and freedom of expression in Estonia, the desire for spending on ones craving has been unleashed, however in a moderate fashion because of the environmental effect. Also the ease of travelling from Estonia to other parts of Europe, means an opportunity embraced by these interviewees, making it an added consumption pattern.

The second realization arising from the research was the factors that influence consumption of these interviewees in Estonia. The analysis focused mainly on advertisement and the culture. Since some brands are given a global effect by virtue of the celebrity and concept of advertisement, we sought to find out if any such influences has occurred. It was discovered that most of our interviewees are not influenced by celebrity advertisement but by their knowledge of the brand and actual experience. Others are also influenced by friend and family recommendation of the brand. However, the actual usage or expression of a brand and consumption pattern is influenced by the predominant culture in the environment. Interviewees are influenced by Estonia's general

acceptance of product sustainability and recycling so whilst they previously were not used to buying or selling used belongings and disposable items like paper plates, they are now a fan of it. Thirdly, we found from this research that the lack of English subtitles on product labels in Estonia is inhibiting the purchase and consumption of so many products. There was no question of product variety, however, interviewees were confined to those product and brands they previously knew and those that were recommended to them by friends. Considering many foreigners currently living in Tallinn, such inhibition means lost opportunity for businesses to make more sales. Having English subtitles will be a useful addition. We also observed from this research that the relative simplicity with which social events such as parties and weddings are organized here in Estonia, means many more people getting involved. Interviewees shared how they would mostly skip social events for the lack of ‘extraordinary’ clothes in Iran but readily jumps on one with ease without any feeling of uneasiness in Estonia.

Lastly, the author observed that the freedom of expression and ‘do as it pleases you’ way of shopping in Estonia means people shop for convenience and not for impression. Interviewees recounted that they buy what they want, how much they need and when they need it without having any concern of someone watching. We however, realised that the absence of many shops selling foreign ingredients for cooking, ie. Iranian or Turkish foodstuffs, means they are denied mostly the consumption of their preferred dishes. Businesses can consider quantifying the population and demand of the minority and see how to satisfy same.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

General info about the informant (background and values, purchase behaviour)

- Please tell about yourself a little. What is your age, what do you do? How would you characterise yourself in a few words?
- What are your interests, ie the things you spend resources on...? Time, money, etc that gives you satisfaction? What is important for you in life? And what is it that you don't really care about, what values are unimportant for you?
- What does satisfaction mean to you? The material satisfaction or prestige satisfaction?

CONSUMER CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

- How do people in your country in general respond to buying or consuming new products? Do they patronise it based on the advert and packaging or based on recommendation either by reviews or referrals?
- How do you respond to advertisement or celebrity recommendation?
- Can you tell if your culture back home has any influence on your tastes and preferences?
- Have your tastes and references changed since coming to Tallinn? Tell me how it was before and now?
- How are the following here in Tallinn different from your home country: Adverts, weather, product varieties, friends, shop environment, etc
- Has the unfamiliar culture changed the way you shop or your tastes and preferences?

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Have you lived in other country apart from your home country and Estonia?
Are there any differences in the way people shop or consume stuff? Have those differences had any effect on your own consumption behaviour?
- What about your friends here, roommates, have they in any way influenced what you buy, wear or eat?
- What other general things have you observed here which has also influenced your values and consumption?

PROCESSES

- Did you encounter any cultural shocks, when you arrived here with respect to what people eat, wear or buy?
- Tell us your experience, the first time you visited a shop here in Tallinn. What visible things were different?
- How did you cope with those differences?
- Where there any challenges you encountered adjusting to this new trend?
- Have you encountered any challenges buying your preferred products since arriving in Tallinn?
- What do you think should be done to address those challenges?

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please share your consumption story with us.

How would you describe yourself in terms of your behaviour towards the things you consume?

Do you consume by choice or chance? Do you have preferences or go with what is available?

- Does money or income determine your preferences?
- What about friends and family, do they have any influence on what you consume?

FINAL WORDS, SUMMARY

Do you want to add anything?

How would you summarize your consumption culture experience so far? Are there any influences in your satisfaction, ie material satisfaction vs prestige satisfaction?

Thank you

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES

Moderator: Hello ladies. Welcome to this discussion and thank you for your help and assistance during my thesis. I would like to ask you guys first to tell me a little bit about yourself age and what are you doing here. And some words about yourself. That's it. Thank you. So, we will start with Reyhaneh

Interviewee A: Hello my name is Reyhaneh Jodat and I'm 27 years old. I am currently studying Industrial Engineering in Tallinn University of Technology and I've been living here for two and a half years. And I characterize myself as a kind and generous person and also independent. Means that I can take care of my life task by myself.

Moderator: Perfect.

Interviewee B: Hello my name is Roxana. I graduated from TalTech last January. I started my MIBA Master of International Business Administration and currently I'm working. So yeah. And I characterize myself as Also independent strong woman. And that's it.

Interviewee C: My name is Marie, I graduated from TalTech in computer science and then I'm 35 almost 34 years old, I am also sort of independent

Interviewee D: My name is Hoda and I am studying at TalTech university and I'm studying processes of sustainable energetics. OK it sounds complicated but it's not. It's related to renewable energies and all these things that we are encountering right now and I'm 37 years old and I'm here for almost one and half year and I am working actually at the same time. And also I'm independent. I can take care of everything. Not only my family but everything and everyone in my life and I can characterize myself mainly by being perseverance. That's it.

Interviewee E: Hello my name is Salma. I am. 34 years old. And I graduated from TalTech in technology of wood, plastic and textile. Very long name. And I was in plastic part means I am mostly chemical engineers. Right now, I'm working and about character. I think I am really hardworking, when I start something I have to finish on time and try to be very sensible.

Moderator: OK. Awesome. So, as you know ladies we are gonna talk about consumer culture which is a lot of habits and every other factors that lead to being a consumer In our life. So, I want to know what are your interests that you guys spend your resource like time money energy on it. And I would like to know about it. Like what is it that it is important for you, you are eager to pay money for it and it doesn't matter how much is that whether it's pricey or whether it is cheap okay.

Interviewee A: Actually, my main interests are watching movies party with friends and the most important things in my life are Family and friends and pursing my goals and what I really don't care about is traditional customs and the opinions of other people.

Moderator: So, you said that you are partying and spending time with your friends

Interviewee A: with my friends and watching movie, party

Moderator: So, in terms of a consumer, what would you consider when you party

Interviewee A: Time and money for buying stuff of the party. my main interest in my free time. I go to parties every weekend.

Moderator: So, alcohol is something that you really spend money for. How about in Iran?

Interviewee A: no because alcohol in Iran is like a black market. You cannot access to alcohol easily.

Moderator: So, you were not drinking back in Iran

Interviewee A: we can supply alcohol just by dealers.

Moderator: Okay so something that has changed during your life is that.

Interviewee A: Yeah. Party with alcohol and without alcohol

Moderator: Thank you.

Interviewee B: Okay. About me. Oh, I forgot to mention I'm 27 years old by the way I'm Roxanna again. Well when I was in Iran, I used to be a very festive and also a party girl too. But since then when I just moved in here three years ago, I started to just think about developing myself. The amount of partying here really decreased so much. I'm not gonna like visit my friends so much because I really don't have time for anything.

Moderator: You're working

Interviewee B: I'm working studying or doing something else I I'm really short of time so in this field like lifestyle I would say yeah it has been changed but in Iran the thing is you don't pay for partying or going out because it is very common in Iran that women should not pay when they are with a guy, and if they do it is kind of an insult for a guy and he would be offended. So, women usually don't pay for anything when they are out with a guy. And here we actually have to pay even everything so yeah. This has been changed and it's a fact. So, I would say yeah unless. Although here I'm doing less partying or stuff but I'm spending more because I need to pay for myself when I'm like in Estonia yeah and I'm spending my time only for self-development. I go to GYM. I didn't go to GYM when I was in Iran.

Moderator: why so?

Interviewee B: I don't know it has been like. That the environment here really like affected me in a way that you have to take care of yourself and health and back then I was smoking drinking right now I'm not that much okay. Once in a while yes but I'm not really spending money on that. So

Moderator: yeah exactly environment. here is for me like when I see everyone exercising and running on the street while you're going toward your destination I see people and I'm like Oh my

God what I'm doing I have to practice. Exactly. That was a really good point and I want to ask you another question. You mentioned that you are spending more here compared to Iran. Although you are not partying, what do u think are the main reasons?

Interviewee B: Yeah. Yeah. First of all is that As I said I was spending my own money. So it's actually

Moderator: in Iran You parents were spending money for you.

Interviewee B: Yeah. Yeah.

Moderator: You were dependent on them but now you are paying everything on your own.

Interviewee B: Yeah. This is something that. Yeah.

Back then my parents used to pay for me for everything. Right now, I have to pay everything and comparing the prices here. Like you have to pay like a lot more because here things are a lot more expensive. So, I think that's it from my side.

Interviewee C: So, what it is important for me? Cats my cats and so if I have to pay for them I don't mind how much it is I will pay. If They have some health problem or something but they generally don't have that much cost. And also, health and maybe cosmetics, I really like cosmetics, makeup. And yeah in Estonia, I don't know. It's maybe age but I had a lot of dental problems, so I spend a lot of money on that. Um what else. I don't know but it was saving it on us in Iran.

Moderator: And what is it that you really don't care about and it's unimportant for you.

Interviewee C: Mm hmm. No maybe like it's not that important it's just not in my lifestyle, going out that much maybe for like meals out or movies and stuff. We do it but it's not something that I really need it, just for socialization. Yeah.

Interviewee D: OK. Back to Iran. I used to spend much money on going to a restaurants and. Going out to eat a but. (her baby was crying so Hoda had to calm him down)

Interviewee E: Uh. The things that I really don't care to spend money is travelling. And the thing. Which is which is really different for me is that in even I was in Iran I never travelled alone. Most of the time maybe for university things. but here because I have a lot of opportunities, everything is close to me, Kinds of different countries. (she meant she does not mind spending a lot of money on travelling). Traveling is much easier compared to Iran I think, even in Iran traveling to different cities is really hard. but here you just buy a ticket and go it's completely easy and I think this is very good change that I have here and the things that I really don't care is What other people think about me. I do just fun and just the things that I think is good for me. I never care honestly about others and this is another change that I found here because in Iran I was really worried about other

people's thinking but as far as I came here actually I try to be like this, I don't care about the people thinking and what else?

Moderator: But in terms of buying this stuff or being a consumer what is it that's not very important for you. For example, brands. Is it important for you or she said that GYM is important for her in her life but maybe for someone else they don't want to pay that much for GYM. They prefer to do it by their own. Or anything else like I don't know the brand of your wine or whether you drink beer at home, or you want to have a nice cocktail outside.

Interviewee E: Spending money when am travelling is really good for me. That's when I am in Tallinn, No I prefer to save money just for travelling and be really free when I'm travelling. But. About GYM it was really good that you mentioned that I was in Iran I didn't care about the money I spent for GYM because my father spent it and I was always in the gym but right now because the gym near my place is very expensive so I quit, because it is expensive but right now I earn money myself and then have to be careful about my money to save, and actually balance my expenses and unfortunately I don't go to a gym at the moment just because of the price

Moderator: just because of money. And what are the other things that you are not that much eager to spend money on

Interviewee E: alcohol. I really don't want to spend money for alcohol. I mean when I have a good company. I don't care. I tend to spend but most of the time I prefer to stay at home and don't drink alcohol, just watching movie and being in my own life, not being very social. And maybe because of my age I became more Introvert and I am not very sociable. I prefer, you know I am living with these two guys and they always want to go somewhere and I asking me What are you doing here. You think you should go somewhere. And I say No I just I want to be calm and, But generally money is very is more important for me in Tallinn than in Iran because in Iran my father spent for everything and I didn't know where this money came from and they just spent. But now I realized that I have to work hard to get this money and I have to be careful.

Moderator: Yes exactly. This is I think some cultural thing. Iranian or Persian culture that parents they will support you until the end of your life.

Interviewee E: Exactly. Even right now for example lot of the cultural things, that my mother says don't work a lot, I will send money for you and I am like come on, it euro based here.

Moderator: So, we'll continue with Hoda

Interviewee D: Oh okay. This is Hoda speaking. When I was in Iran I just started my marital life and I was somehow in this Culture that women do not work and that they don't care about money and they have to spend their time going to GYM, shopping, for example going to beauty salons and so on and I have so many women around me that they were living in such a way but and their husbands afford for everything and I had this idea. But deep in my mind I thought that it must be something different and I always wanted to live abroad and study abroad. So when I came here I started my own lifestyle and I started to work hard and to save money to manage everything, expenses, savings and all the things that is related to the family. And I'm so happy happier right now because I think this is the life that modern world really requires. And when about the things that I care a lot is that I really love to spend my money on let's say Oh. Jewelleries, cloths, bags and shoes and I care about the brands and I prefer not to buy anything but brands. I mean I prefer to buy more expensive things, but I don't want to have for example several t shirts but all of them are. Three euros three euros but I want to have one T-shirt that is 15 euros for example. And but that 15 euros t shirt should be for example Mango and this is the thing that I really care about. Also, for watches and jewellery I feel the same way and also my husband thinks the same and about my child. I follow the same routine. I mean I don't buy anything, but I prefer to buy something that is really fashionable in some cases and I don't want him to wear anything or to eat anything. And the thing that I really don't care about I mean it's not about the caring it's about being not important that it is processed food or fast food. I don't really care about buying or spending money I don't really like to spend my money on fast foods or let's say a processed foods or ready foods that are in the grocery stores. But I care about buying fresh vegetables and buying fresh fruits. That's it for me

Moderator: I think I need to ask this question from Roxana and Reyhaneh that. What are the things that you are like you don't care and you don't want to spend that much of money on it?

Interviewee A: OK. During these two years I never go to the hair salon. It is exactly like that. Even when I was in Iran I was not used to going to hair salon and beauty salons because uh because uh I do it by myself. Yeah, I don't say that is good or bad. But it is my habit. I don't spend money for that. maybe just for a party or wedding parties I go but not for like monthly.

Interviewee B: I care about everything. I don't know if I happen to spend my money then I spend my money. I don't care. It's like I'm not like forcing myself to you shouldn't do this or you should do that. I'm doing everything that is needed. It's not like I'm having this rule in my life that I'm moving towards that limit the wants and expand the needs. You know like the need for a product or whatever it is. So, whatever I want I try to think twice before I purchase or whatever. But what I need I go and purchase, no matter how much does it cost because I need this in my life and if it's

not there then I cannot live happy because here we have this happiness issues that if we even limit ourselves on spending money this way is like for me doesn't work that way. Plus the GYM thing. The thing is my company covers this GYM fee so it's like every three months they pay like one hundred euros. So that's why I can also afford. And of course, I know that it's so expensive here to go out to the gym. Yeah that's it.

Moderator: Okay cool. Okay ladies. We will continue with the next question. That is what does satisfaction mean to you. Or you can just mention that regarding your shopping and consumer behaviour. Do you buy stuff, or do you consume stuff to fulfil your material satisfaction or your prestige satisfaction?

Interviewee B: It's Roxana. I buy stuff here when I moved here. I'm actually at the beginning I was a little bit lost, so I was doing both of them because I didn't know like how to cope with the society. I didn't even know the fashion. I was just like learning so I was buying stuff that I really don't need them. It's like just for like it was fashionable at that point. And right now I'm like in piles of stuff that I really don't use because I was I was buying these things that I really don't need and thanks to the documentaries that I watched. It's actually I was I got aware of this consumerism behaviour. And at the moment as I said I'm moving forward to being more like satisfying What I need, and I don't care about what I actually want and this prestige thing thanks to my purchase like before like when I was in Iran or like I came here. I had stuff that it's prestigious, so I don't need to buy them anymore. It's like as I said we don't go out so much here. So, you got to have like some couple of fancy clothes and you just put them on and that's it. When you're when you're going out. So, I'm not spending much money for the buying fancy stuff. To be honest in Iran I was really spending money on fancy stuff because there as my friend said Salma people really care about how you look. But here they really don't. And so actually you yourself also don't care like that much about how you do look or whatever. Which is a little bit bad but yeah I'm more of a what I what I need than I buy stuff. Not in the sense that yeah

Moderator: yeah. You said that when you were in Iran you used to buy so fancy stuff. It was a cultural thing that people they are in that show mood and just want to show off their stuff?

Interviewee B: Yeah yeah. Yeah exactly in Iran like it was crazy. Everybody has this like I don't know. I was in a really like reach kind of neighbourhood and friends. So, they were like all the time carrying this luxurious stuff, luxurious cars and you know you needed to be presentable when you are with them. It's such a pressure like every party or gathering you need to be good you need to look good your hair your makeup your whatever it is. So that's why people in Iran spend most of their money on their look and how do they look at least in my area. I don't know but here it's actually not that important. So I'm really spending less less money on this part of my life.

Moderator: Why do you think it's the reason, What's the reason that people in Iran they do really care about their Physical appearance?

Interviewee B: Is actually I don't have any problem with that. It's like I really like the idea of that How people in Iran live that way because it's beauty and always like, of course I'm having problems with consumerism but uh yeah it has its pros and cons but why do I think they are doing this way. I don't know. Maybe.

Moderator: What is the difference between Iran and here, in Iran people they have to, I don't know in a sense that they have to really care about their physical appearance? Do you think that there is something behind it or?

Interviewee B: I'm not sure how to answer this, is really I just don't know. I don't know what that causes

Interviewee C: There are more gatherings like you see people so much more but here we just go to work and come back home, there is no occasion to dress up that much.

Interviewee B: Yeah, there life is a lot more festive a lot more festive. You go out a lot. And of course, this limitation of hijab when you have in public and I think people satisfy these needs with just being like fashionable. Even with the hijab you know like they try to be colourful, they try to be chic and so they try to present themselves when they are in the private parties or whatever. So that's the thing that it looks like. I all the time call Tehran, like a small New York because it's actually is like the way people dress or like do whatever they are, I am like wow it's interesting. But here people are like just more comfy and you know like I've seen people like wearing one clothes like I don't know 10 times in a row when I see them. It's like they don't really care, they care about comfort. So, it's because they don't, they don't have to prove to someone that oh look I'm cool or whatever. So, I think this is from my side.

Moderator: And among all these ladies I know that two of you Marie and Hoda. You have been living in other countries. I want to check that. How were things different in a way people shop or consume stuff and have those differences had any effect on your own consumption behaviour or not.

Interviewee C: So, what I can say that compared to Germany that I was before coming here I think people are a bit more fashionable here. So, like especially for women. There were a lot of dresses and skirts and high heels and so on in Germany Women are not womanish. Yeah. So, I think that had some effect on me because now I feel that it's quite okay and normal to wear high heels because I'm also tall. So, at the time I was also less interested in like more ladylike outfits um but then also in Germany about general shops they are all closed on Sundays so that we can.

Shopping trips that I have here sometimes. You can't do that there. And they also closed shops around 7 or 8 during the week. And in Tallinn they're generally open until 9:00 shopping centers. So that affects the time that you can spend going out on the window shopping at this maybe not buying anything.

Interviewee D: Well I have lived in Italy for almost one year and about let's say food consumption it was totally friend day spent so much money on coffee and pasta and let's say cheese. But about clothes and I would say that because in a city that I was living was somehow let's say summer was much more hotter than here. And they used to buy more swim wears and different sort of things related to summer holiday and the clothes were somehow different from here. And that's why I guess people spend a lot much less money on buying winter clothes and

Moderator: And you mentioned that living in Italy let you be more fashionable. So, this is something that has this effect on you.

Interviewee D: Yeah yeah. You can see people in Italy are very fashionable especially in Milan and they really wear really good clothes and they care about brands and they rarely buy used let's say stuffs and especially about clothes and not about the furniture and but they live somehow more economically than here. I mean their consumption level is somehow lower than here I guess because they're living expenses is higher than here. And that's why they spend their money mostly on let's say beauty things and on clothes they don't have any fear to spend their money on their own clothes. And that's the most significant difference that I have seen here comparing to Italy.

Interviewee D: Yeah. I am fond of cheese I especially blue cheese because I didn't know blue cheese when I was in Iran. And I mean the different types of cheeses and I was I got familiar with various types of cheese when I was in Italy and I am some kind of consumer let's say persistent consumer of cheese right now and this one affected me comparing to when I was in Iran OK.

Interviewee C: So why do I buy things. Okay yeah. I don't spend money on brands and stuff much. I don't care about it. But then at some point I realize that also very cheap things don't last much. So, I'm trying to find that middle ground of having good quality but then not paying for the name but maybe for very essential stuff, I go for bigger names just because I feel that maybe the quality is better. But not as like fashion brands like maybe I don't know if I'm buying. So, I was thinking to buy a winter coat, so I was thinking well maybe I should spend two or three hundred euros because it will last more, and it will be more waterproof and everything So yeah something in the middle.

Moderator: You also mentioned that you are into cosmetics.

Interviewee C: Yeah. but also, cosmetics I just like the Fun of playing with it so it doesn't matter if it's a really good brand or it's like I don't know. I just like colours.

Moderator: How about the quality. So, because we have this I don't know if you have. Actually, I can ask you Do you have this viewpoint that the more expensive the product is the better quality. Do you think this is?

Interviewee C: Yeah. to some extent so. So, I have a theory that if it's like very low price there is something wrong with it I guess. But if it's too expensive also it doesn't say that it is better quality than something that is middle price. So, if it's I don't know if it's a shoe I think you can find a really good shoe under 200 euros already which is like it will last forever. But if you buy something more than that it's already for brand but if you want to buy I don't know Channel or some Gucci something, I think it's much more than that, so for quality I think it is still expensive but not that much.

Moderator: So, you don't consider prestige in your consumer behaviour or your consumer, buying stuff

Interviewee C: yeah, not really. It should look OK and good and not look old too fast but that's not about the brands, just this quality of the material that you can see.

Interviewee D: Okay. From my side it was always like this that I I've always cared about my appearance and, but I buy things that I need in a prestigious way. I mean I really want to buy the things that I need but I want them to be brands but. And it may happen that I spend let's say two months searching for my suitable bag that I really like it but I don't buy any bags. And I know what kind of style do I look for and what kind of let's say colour do I look for. But I meanwhile in two months period I really need a bag. But I'd avoid buying any kinds of bags. And I've always been like this. And about the thing that we had in Iran I had the same behaviour back there and let's say I didn't care about what people or what my appearance affects people or have the influence what kind of influence it has on my peers around me. But the thing is that it satisfies myself and it's really important for me that I look good I and because I like the way people wear clothes here and I have the experience of living in Italy so that's the way that I really appreciate the way that they wear clothes here and I really hated the hijab and all those long coats and we call it Manto and I hated it and that's why I didn't really care about what kind of things that I'm going to wear and I really didn't care about how do I look. But here I'm completely vice versa so I care about how I look and how I buy things. That's why. Because I think I can be a woman much better when I was comparing to the time that I was in Iran and I can enjoy all those womanize things in let's say dresses high heeled shoes and scarves in different ways. And this is really enjoyable for me. That's from my side

Interviewee E: about this question I think right now I can see they are both, because based on the place that I am working that I have to be colourful all the time and working with children and I can't wear boring clothes every day. So it's better to have different kind of clothes and based on my experience the brands fit better and then so I don't care if I found something really good. I spend money for that but. Not just because it is brand just because it is fit for me and show I am more satisfied with that kind of dress for example. But about shoes. Yes I look for brands. Shoes is something that's really important and I really don't care to spend money for brand shoes because I know they are really comfy and very good. But I can't only buy brands because I need a lot of clothes so I as Marie said I chose some middle brands which is not very expensive is not very low quality and mostly this is normal in my life that I have to spend money for clothes. Most of, most of my money is for clothes and shoes and actually this is my job. I have to be like.

Moderator: So, you mean that you were not that much into colourful clothes and outfits?

Interviewee E: in Iran you mean?

Moderator: Yeah. In Iran or you yourself your personality

Interviewee E: Maybe I didn't have. I didn't do it a lot. I was I. I really enjoy colourful and different kind of clothes. Actually, in Iran I had a lot of clothes because I rarely wear them I because. Colorful and not colourful and different kinds of clothes for example different skirts different dresses, because we have to be always like men. Most of the time, to cover our body. So, I had a lot of clothes, but I didn't wear them. Right now, I have opportunity to wear everything and now I use this opportunity and buy a lot of clothes and dresses.

Moderator: Okay great.

Interviewee A: So, about the prestige satisfaction point of view, I would like to say that this kind of satisfaction means to me is like just only having an acceptable appearance in the society. So, I don't look for a brand or even high-quality dresses because I know that finally I will use them just for six months or one year. I know that they will be old and maybe six months later. I don't like to use it anymore, so I don't I don't like to pay more for these products. But the thing that I would like to spend is about the electrical devices like tablets or laptops because I know that I will use them more than five years more than 6 years, so I like to spend more money on them but about dresses this is not important for me.

Moderator: OK ladies. Will go for the next question and I would like to ask you how people in Iran respond to buying or consuming new products. Do they patronize it based on these adverts and packaging or based on recommendation either by reviews or referrals and we will start with Salma?

Interviewee E: In Iran. According to my experience most people first of all consider price and then if the price is affordable for them then they go for a recommendation at least the people around me doesn't care about the advertisement because they believe that most of the advertisements are not correct and they are just exaggerating something. But commendation I think even I even me really use recommendation for buying different things. So, I think price and recommendation.

Moderator: Yeah. Thank you.

Interviewee B: For me. Definitely recommendations. I don't not care about the advertisements. I still do not care even here. But back then in Iran. Whenever example like whatever when you go to a beauty salon then you know whom like work is better or whatever. So, you book a time with that person or Somebody takes some, I don't know product and then just gives their recommendation. Is it good or bad or whatever? Then I just go off with the recommendations and uh This is for me.

Interviewee C: Yeah and I think in my region most of the thing is like Fashion something comes to the fashion and everybody has it for some reason I don't know who starts it or what. At least for clothes and stuff personal stuff even maybe for furniture and home decoration I have seen like I don't know same frames everywhere when I visit sometimes or same like I don't know so far as type or something. At least in my region it's very like I don't know, It's not recommendation. it's like Something is in fashion and everybody just gets it. Yeah it's not that wow like one person knows that's good and recommend it but it's some waves of mode and fashion. Yeah trend

Moderator: some kinds of trend. It's something even without recommending to others, others will think that oh this person bought his and I have to buy these as well.

Interviewee C: Yeah but it's like in a very large scale like the whole city is now wearing this thing. It's a bit funny but it is true.

Interviewee A: In my opinion. Both of them play a role in shopping. And. But I think mostly advertising because in my experience advertising gives a legal profile to the products in my country for example I remember when people were looking for a slim peel, If they if they take the advertisement in TV shows or in big billboard in highways then it was like the OK. It is healthy it doesn't have any side effect. It is under the surveillance of that government and it's OK. So, I think advertising can play a key role behind the, this conception culture of the people and then. Of course, recommendations. I think when people need something first they look for advertising and then search about their reviews and commendations of other people.

Interviewee D: For me personally it depends on the things that I need if I need something I don't care if they recommend me or I would see it in the advertisement but if I don't need anything I usually refer to the price sometimes price are tempting because you are because you see that. Oh

my God. This is 70 percent off so let's buy it. And it's mainly through the advertisements but referrals no maybe because I don't like to wear or buy something that others have. Well I don't like to be similar to others, I think people in Iran they don't care. You know when something is in fashion you can see it in every house. And you can see it in every house and or even you can see so many friends so many people similar to each other because they all wear the same kind of scarves or same hairstyle or same makeup. And even in surgeries you can see this because they all have this Let's say nose jobs and all of them are look the same. And this is something that you can see in your country, but I cannot say that you cannot see it here in Estonia because I have seen so many people with lashes extensions or nail extensions. And I think this is something related to your age and your mood that you want to let's say follow the trend or follow the fashion or not this is something completely personal. And as we are coming to some kind of global let's say environment and everything is going to be globally widespread. So, we cannot say that this is something completely limited to the culture and because you can see something that is produced in the United States and you can see it in China and you can see it in Japan and every people every country have their own let's say participant to go to follow those trends. And I guess this is something that is completely related to advertisement not only the culture or let's say recommendation.

Moderator: The next question is that how do you respond to advertisements or celebrity recommendation?

Interviewee E: Honestly speaking I really don't care about the celebrity because I know my body I know what is fit for me I know which cosmetic is good for my skin. So, whatever they use it's good for them and it's good for their budgets. It's not maybe good for me. So, I really don't care about this thing. Thank you.

Interviewee B: Celebrity advertisement to me has a has an effect that uh it actually makes me feel that I need something but I actually don't need or like they make me feel like OK if I have this then I have the I don't know some kind of attention of others or like I'm gonna be the acceptable person in this society which I write now when I'm more mature. I'm having this problem that. This is not true and this has to be stopped because we are mature. We are like adults, but it might have an effect like on teenagers or something because they think they think like they're insecure or like they are not like slim enough. I don't know that they're another beautiful enough or so I'm having a huge problem with this thing right now. So therefore, I really don't follow whatever a celebrity especially on Instagram like the most famous ones like are trying to advertise because I know what is behind it. I studied business and I know all of it all of it is just like business and they do not care

about society's way of thinking and how do they affect people. So to me it's actually they don't have any effect on me but maybe on back of my head they have I don't know but I don't accept it. So that's it.

Interviewee C: Uh Advertising. It depends what it is. If something that interesting for me it has the effect that I'll go and check it up see the reviews, see how it works or whatever. Like I wanted to buy some gaming console and the other day I saw some advertising about this switch. So, I was just thinking that if there is some offer or whatever to just look it up. Also, about makeup and cosmetics that I really like and it is my hobby if I see advertising I because generally they advertise new stuff. So, I see that as something new came up. So, I'll go and check it out with you. I may not. Necessarily buy it but it has the effect that I'll go try it maybe in the shop, test it, see the reviews by some videos about it and stuff like that. celebrity advertising. Well not the big celebrity like I don't know. Actors and stuff. But I also follow some of the smaller community celebrities like in the makeup world. There are some people who are famous but only for people who follow makeup. So, it's not like you won't have heard their names but they have a lot of followers in their own community. So, I follow them and if they suggest something I'll definitely go and check it out.

Interviewee E: This is something that maybe they recommend especially for Cosmetics. We don't know what is new product.

Interviewee A: about the celebrity advertisements. I can say that if I really feel that having that product is really necessary for me then I will look at the advertisement and even celebrity advertisement. But. I definitely consider the price. And I don't skip the searching by myself. if if I cannot afford that price. And I would I'd be sure that this product has a high quality. Then I try to find a similar product or alternative of that product.

Interviewee D: OK. For me personally I go with Salma's opinion because I think that I know myself my style and I don't really easy get affected by celebrities and because I have I now in my budget I know my body and I know everything that is related to me and my behaviour and. Only because some celebrity has worn something like fashion of a coat. It doesn't satisfy me that you OK. It would fit me as well. So, that's it for me I don't really care about that. These people are famous, and they don't recommend bad things and they don't want to fool us. But I really care about my style. And the thing that I really like it. I mean. It can be a way you can see there if I really need this. And sometimes it's completely accidentally. I cannot say accidentally because for example you look for something in the Internet and you can see the right as advertisement the day after or even two hours after. And you can see that. OK. I needed this. So, let's say let's look at it. Let's check it out. If the price is OK if the shipping is free if all these things and then you can see

to buy it or not for me it happened with a necklace. That I was looking for a necklace and I saw an advertisement on Instagram and I saw that it is free. OK. Oh my God. It's free and only shipping and only 12 euros and that's so good. It's 24k gold. Oh my God. And I. And at the moment that I paid for that necklace I thought Oh my God what a fool I am for and for the thing that they really don't know for the company that I don't know. And I was. Or the whole month that I was waiting for the product I was feeling guilty because I didn't know if I spent the budget of the family for something that is not real. And it was really bad. And it made me feel really bad. And when I received it I was happy about it. I mean I thought that OK. Yeah actually I went to that Web site again and checked for the new products and all also for free products. And I was somehow tempted to buy again but something in my mind said that OK you're not going to risk your money again. So be sensible and sit at your place and don't do anything stupid again. And although it wasn't stupid. But I don't want to do it again. And I still go for the website and I still check the comments and I and everyone said that this is this is the. This is a scam. And I will write that this isn't a scam. I've got my necklaces but. I won't do it again. I don't like this stress successfully. Yeah because all the stress that I felt during that moment. It was really so bad so bad and I don't want to feel it again.

Moderator: So, the next question is that if you guys can tell me that your culture in Iran has any influence on your taste and preferences?

Interviewee E: Uh one of the most uh tangible thing is that in Iran as a girl I have uh I had a lot of limitation in terms of clothes. For example, I should uh. There are difference between men and men boys and girls and we always girls should be more cautious about the way they are dressing. And right now, I have this uh culture with myself and this still even in my own home and in my private. When there is a boy beside me. I am not that much uh free, feeling comfortable if I were open clothes because this is in my mind that I shouldn't I shouldn't do this thing. Also, if everything is free at the moment and I can do whatever, but I can't really.

Moderator: So, in terms of your pyjamas or stuff at home you won't buy clothes open ones because you're living with two boys.

Interviewee E: Exactly. Because I'm with these two boys. I should. They don't care. I know they don't care. But I do. And uh actually it's not fair and I don't like this situation. But this is in my some. I can say my blood that I can't do anything with that this is something from my part.

Interviewee B: Uh yeah. To me it's actually more of a food uh consumption which uh in the back of my head I don't like I don't like to buy pork because uh it's not about because I'm a I'm a religious person or something. It's only because yeah in Iran we did, and we never eat pork meat and uh yeah. One side of the story is that it's because it is not halal and it's not like really acceptable in our. Yeah. We could taste it and I tasted it and I don't have any religious related problem with that.

But I had this friend who told me like this is not good for your body and stuff like this. So, um I still. Have this culture in my, with me that I actually don't buy pork and I prefer the beef meat. And um yeah this is my point of view and a lot of stuff actually like the way that Iranians shop are a lot different. We use like so many stuff. We buy like herbs we buy like uh because our cuisine is so different than Estonia. So, we actually buy like beans different kinds veggies or whatever to make our foods and I don't think like uh Estonians here buy so many of these that we buy. Yeah. This is the for me.

Interviewee C: I think. Dressing a bit more conservatively also. I do it. I mean I. Mm mm. In general I just I think I don't feel comfortable wearing like very short things are very revealing things just because I haven't done it when I was teenager or younger. So, it's already a habit and I'm like I don't think about it. But it's just like something that I don't feel comfortable. And the other thing is that I feel Much more comfortable wearing more makeup than maybe normal people here. Or actually here in Estonia people wear a lot of makeup but even when I was living in different countries I was like okay you being a bit more made up

Interviewee A: I can speak about the family parties and friend parties in my culture and in my own culture people are responsible to supply and all that stuff for guests and include food drinks all the plates and everything. But here in Estonia there is a habit that guests need to must need to bring their stuff their food and drinks to the party. And also, I can speak about the. We never in our culture. We never use reusable plates or plastic plates, we always use the silver wears or China wears. And. So even if we don't have that stuff we try to borrow them from our parents and our sisters or other members of the family. So, I still kept that culture.

Interviewee D: from my culture. it wasn't let's say I recommend that to buy used or secondhand clothes and I still keep this habit. And I really don't buy anything that is that is used and that's it for me.

Moderator: OK. And the next question is that you have your taste and references changed since coming to Tallinn. E And uh how it was before and how it is now.

Interviewee E: The first thing comes to my mind is about foodstuff. For example, in Iran I never buy this uh yogurt with different taste of taste of fruit. But I don't know maybe it was there but of course it was very expensive. Mm. Higher than my budget that I never ate but as far as I came to Tallinn uh I taste them, and this is one of my favourite and it is always in my baskets shopping basket. And actually, something like uh peanut butter I never buy there but here because I am living alone and sometimes I don't have anything so I have to have something to eat. And this kind of food is stuff is the most tangible things that I feel. In my life.

Interviewee B: uh to me also I continue with the food consumption uh because here we have like this mentality of uh being vegan, vegetarian stuff is good for you. And it really affected me, and I really pursue to have a healthy lifestyle. So, I stopped uh purchasing dairy products and I start I started to buy plant-based milks and dairies. Whatever it is. And also, like vegan ice-cream like in Iran. Like we don't have this kind of vegan ice cream but here we have a variety of products uh food wise. So, we can actually like go with whatever preferences that we have we actually want and uh vegan options are like a lot better than Iran. This is from me.

Interviewee C: for me I think in Tallinn I think my sense of fashion change a bit. So, I am a bit more minimalistic here. I used to be more like girly colourful skirts floral, but I think Tallinn has some effect on my fashion choices. Um and also, I pay more for books and entertainment here. And compared to Iran because I think we were used to either to just copy things without really caring about the copyright issues and or just I don't know having that well we had library you could just go and read Persian books and everything was fine but here I don't have access to that many English books so I need to buy them.

Interviewee A: Uh in my own country. I never used alcoholic stuff as much as I used here because I didn't have access to them easily but here at least four or five times in a month I will use them. And also, I use snus and it is a replacement or alternative option of a cigarette. I didn't have such a product in Iran so uh I can't say every month I spent about 200 Euros. Two for buying snus and also maybe one hundred on alcoholic stuff but I didn't have such a cost in my own country.

Interviewee D: I used to buy lots of fresh vegetables when I was in my country. I mean every Wednesday I remember that I went to the bazaar and I bought as much as I could fresh herbs and vegetables like eggplants cucumbers and tomatoes and so one by here I have to buy some of my favourite vegetables like broccoli or let's say Mm hmm, Flower cabbage as in Frozen Form which is not my favourite but also green beans. It's not my favourite behaviour but I don't have any other choices because fresh vegetables are really expensive here. That's it.

Moderator: OK. Now I would like to ask Salma. It's about product varieties how it was in Iran and how far it's different from Tallinn?

Interviewee E: In Iran as far as I remember they are they were not a lot of different sizes because most of their product came from, I think China and they made by their according to their own size and most of the clothes are really small. But the things here which was very very interesting for me the first days that I visit the shopping malls here that there are different kind of sizes for every size. They have something and even there are some special shop in shopping place for oversized people which was really interesting for me and really make shopping clothes a variety of shopping

clothes. It makes it very easier. And in terms of food stuff again is much more much different because as far as I remember at the moment around 3 years, I haven't been in Iran but in Iran. We have all kind of things but only two or three types for example in terms of cheese for example here we have a lot of different kind of cheese and then. But in Iran we don't have it so variety is very important in my opinion here.

Moderator: So, you can find more varieties here

Interviewee E: More than Iran and shopping is easier here in Tallinn. Honestly, we can't say we can't compare the price because right now we are earning in euro and the price is based on the euro and in Iran the currency is different. So. I if I want to compare with Iran it is expensive but based on our salary and income is not that much different. I think I don't know honestly, I because in Iran my father always spent, and I didn't care about the prices but here I know how much is everything. So, I can be very detailed about that.

Moderator: And I would like to ask Roxana about the shop environment and the difference between Tallinn and Iran?

Interviewee: Well this is so different. Back in Iran we had like shopping centres like for example only for shoes like there was a street only selling shoes like small-small like shops and then you could like spend like hours and hours and hours and you find your shoe or like I don't know like wedding dresses or whatever you are in need but here is like a big shopping centre like this for example say like Kristiine keskus or whatever Keskus here you just go there you you find like specific brands so you know where to go exactly. You know your price range. What are the price ranges how things look like in each and every shop? So you spend actually less time when you go shopping here and shopping centers here like it's like if you go to shopping there is also some small shops like selling food juices I don't know water whatever so you don't starve yourself but in Iran I remember when we when we went to like this small shops to buy some For example I don't have shoes. There was like you really needed to get out of there, so you could get some food or this kind of stuff. And another thing in Iran is that you're not like finding like for example let's say ZARA I see some pants or whatever I want. I really cannot find it because it's like me don't have these branches there. So, we need to like we need to like order online or from someone who lives abroad to bring us this stuff like Nike Nike shoes or whatever like this because these small shops may like sell like I don't know. In one shop Zara Mango whatever brands that they like not specifically me. That's it.

Moderator: And Marie could you please tell me about the differences in weather in Tallinn and Iran How it changed.

Interviewee C: Yeah. Yeah. So, um. Well of course there are places in Iran that is also cold but in general most places. And the place that I come from is it doesn't get as cold as here. And I'm also not as dark as here. So as for my shopping behaviour depending on weather, I like the boots that we call boots in Iran in most of places are like not really usable in winters here because they are not made for this level of snow and ice and everything and also coats and stuff, they are much thinner and not helping here. So, and also, I also because of the darkness I spend a lot of money for um supplements like vitamin D and I also bought some sunlight lamp. So

Moderator: And Reyhaneh could you please tell me about advertisement.

Interviewee A: The method of advertisement in my own country is a little different from here in Estonia and also other European countries. It may because of the religious aspects because for example if in my own country I'm looking for a hair colour product I can't see the products on a Woman hair in the advertisement but here in Estonia we can see them. And it maybe this motivates me to buy that and also about the alcohol or alcoholic products, so I can see them in the advertisement and billboards and yeah.

Moderator: and how about the words in Iran and are all words acceptable or forbidden, or how is it like? Can they use cursing words in their advertisement in Iran?

Interviewee A: No, it's not it's not acceptable. And they just use very formal words, and those words that in no way hurt the religious aspects.

Moderator: Exactly. So, everything should comply with Islam. And I Would like to ask Hoda about Friends. And the difference between Estonia and Tallinn?

Interviewee D: Let's say that when I was in Iran, we got influence from my friend's that We that let's buy for example this brand let's buy that product. But now I'm all I'm all only by my family and I only ask my husband if I have to buy something or if I should buy something or not. And I decide more independently comparing to comparing to when I was in my country

Moderator: So, friends play a significant role in our shopping in Iran rather than here in Estonia

Interviewee D: Yeah and it depends on the age and it depends somehow how close you are with your friends and sometimes close friends get really affected by each other. While they want to shop.

Moderator: And among all these ladies I know that two of you Marie and Hoda. You have been living in other countries. I want to check that. How were things different in a way people shop or

consume stuff and have those differences had any effect on your own consumption behaviour or not.

Interviewee C: So, what I can say that compared to Germany that I was before coming here I think people are a bit more fashionable here. So, like especially for women. There were a lot of dresses and skirts and high heels and so on in Germany Women are not womanish. Yeah. So, I think that had some effect on me because now I feel that it's quite okay and normal to wear high heels because I'm also tall. So, at the time I was also less interested in like more ladylike outfits um but then also in Germany about general shops they are all closed on Sundays so that we can. Shopping trips that I have here sometimes. You can't do that there. And they also closed shops around 7 or 8 during the week. And in Tallinn they're generally open until 9:00 shopping centers. So that affects the time that you can spend going out on the window shopping at this maybe not buying anything.

Interviewee D: Well I have lived in Italy for almost one year and about let's say food consumption it was totally friend day spent so much money on coffee and pasta and let's say cheese. But about clothes and I would say that because in a city that I was living was somehow let's say summer was much more hotter than here. And they used to buy more swim wears and different sort of things related to summer holiday and the clothes were somehow different from here. And that's why I guess people spend a lot much less money on buying winter clothes and

Moderator: And you mentioned that living in Italy let you be more fashionable. So, this is something that has this effect on you.

Interviewee D: Yeah yeah yeah yeah. You can see people in Italy are very fashionable especially in Milan and they really wear really really good clothes and they care about brands and they rarely buy used let's say stuffs and especially about clothes and not about the furniture and but they live somehow more economically than here. I mean their consumption level is somehow lower than here I guess because they're living expenses is higher than here. And that's why they spend their money mostly on let's say beauty things and on clothes they don't have any fear to spend their money on their own clothes. And that's the most significant difference that I have seen here comparing to Italy.

Moderator: Is there anything else that has affected you of being living in Italy?

Interviewee D: Yeah. I am fond of cheese I especially blue cheese because I didn't know blue cheese when I was in Iran. And I mean the different types of cheeses and I was I got familiar with various types of cheese when I was in Italy and I am some kind of consumer let's say persistent consumer of cheese right now and this one affected me comparing to when I was in Iran OK.

Moderator: Now I want to know what about your friends or roommates or people whom you are living with or people that are around you. Have they in any way influence your consumption?

Interviewee B: actually not. Here I don't see any point to follow anybody because you need to live like how you feel more comfortable and personally for me nobody has any influence on me too in a way that I should wear clothes. But of course, I would follow the trends on Instagram mostly to see like what is going on and what is trendy and how to wear. And also, on Pinterest. So, I really follow the fashion dressed and fashion trends in Pinterest but not necessarily from a clothes like friend or like roommate or something.

Interviewee C: Maybe I had some I got some influence from my friends here too. Just in the sense that I think I was unused to spending that much money for the clothes and stuff and then I had some friends that they would their price range was higher. So now I'm a bit more used to spending more money for something.

Interviewee A: Yes, I have an example. For example before I never use vitamin pills but when I go to when I travel with one of my friends and I saw her that every day she used vitamins and then I started to use vitamins and also about the hair mask, I never before I never used hair mask but after one of my friends told me that that hair mask do this and that then I tried to start to use them.

Interviewee E: I was living with an African girl and she was some kind really economic girl. And in the beginning, I didn't know what should I buy what should I do and I was completely confused and she really she had a lot of effect on my shopping behaviour because she always looking look for different discount and whatever is cheaper. And right now, I. Continue I try to continue her way and the other thing that she did and had really affect on me because instead of buying processed food she made all the food herself by different spices and you know African food. And it was very interesting, and I learned a lot from her. And I still continue this thing and it's really good.

Interviewee D: OK I don't have any friends can influence me right now but the only person I can let's say you recommend me different things is my husband and we both live in a way to be more economic and we look for discounts and we look for a cheapest way to live and that's it. I don't really get easy easily influenced by others.

Moderator: The next question is that. What are general things have you observed here which has also influenced your values and consumption. We'll start with Roxana Thank you.

Interviewee B: To me sustainable products as I mentioned before here I can value more about vegan products and being sustainable in a way that I buy. I buy stuff that doesn't need those doesn't require to harm the animals or environment in any way and Another thing that actually added to my value is that here because we need to pay for the plastic bags in the shop I actually don't buy

them anymore. I have I have purchased this bag for myself and I whenever I want to go to shop I just take the bag so I don't buy any plastic which I think that it is absolutely amazing behaving that I got here.

Interviewee C: Here. Because there is so many secondhand shops and also a lot of people are into recycling clothes and everything. I also got into habits of buying things from second hand if I find something that's useful for me and also not throwing away my things and if I don't need them anymore I just try to return it or donate them to the recycling shops or this bins that we have everywhere in Tallinn which was not it's not very acceptable. not acceptable but it's not very common in Iran to do that. It's like ... But here I even had friends that they were so fashionable and they also paid quite a lot for the recycled items. It wasn't like it's cheaper that much is just the behaviour of not adding trash to the environment.

Interviewee A: And the thing that comes to my mind is about the using cereals in breakfast. I never in Iran used cereals, because it wasn't visible in a shopping market. And I never see them in the stores in Iran. But here I found them and Maybe it was because it was visible in shopping market and it they had beautiful packages and motivate me to buy them and try them and used to eat them.

Interviewee E: In Iran because of this hijab Most of the women just pay attention to their face and cosmetic and makeup is very common. But as far as I came here, I was women in Iran and I was the same as others. But. As far as I came here based on the environment here uh everybody are really at least the majority are simple without any very special and heavy makeup. And so, I don't use a lot of makeup here in Tallinn and I really admire this behaviour that I have at the moment because I spend less money for makeup and actually my skin is getting better and better. So, I am happy.

Interviewee D: Well OK. I've always thought that this Let's say giving your used clothes or a stock clothes to others can be somehow disrespectful. But here I found out that this is really a good practice that you can donate your clothes especially for children and that others can use as well. So that's what I think it's a really good value that can be added in my own country as well.

Moderator: OK. And the next question is that. So, have you ever encountered any cultural shocks here when you arrived in Estonia with respect to what people eat where or buy?

Interviewee E: Very interesting experience that I had was about my friend's wedding that when I compare it with the wedding in my country is completely different, for example in Iran Always. A lot of money is spent on snacks and preparation a lot of time and it is really big celebration. But

here they didn't to spend money just a small amount of snack that the people themselves did it even in Iran for example for makeup of the bride makeup is very at least three days the bride goes to the salon and do a lot of things. But in Estonia they just do it exactly in the day that it was wedding and but still it was super good. Very beautiful wedding and I really enjoyed, and it is really shock. And I was thinking OK this way we can have a wedding celebration not just that we have things in Iran could be very expensive.

Interviewee D: The thing that I was really shocked here, we used to buy fruits and vegetables in kilograms. Like for example two kilograms of apples or two kilograms of limes and so on. But here I saw that people buy in numbers. I mean one apple and two limes and that's enough for them. And I was really shocked because it shows that they buy according to their consumption and their needs. They don't really need to buy in let's say whole and large amounts. That's it for me.

Interviewee B: for me I want to refer to the gatherings or parties that we needed to go for me was shocking that they really like in Estonia people really don't pay attention that much like to to be too much you know like in Iran we used to like wear so many fancy clothes and if we look like normal or whatever we prefer not to go to a party or this, but here they really don't care. And actually, this is what I actually got used to and I'm doing the same. So, I just feel more comfortable going out with whatever mood or whatever style I have and that's it.

Interviewee C: Mm hmm. So, I remember the cultural shock about food that I had the first time we went out with friends to a restaurant from university and they had the dish which I don't remember the name, but it was raw, raw meat with raw egg on it. And so, it was like minced meat and shaped like a hamburger but also on top of it was raw egg and my friend ate it and I was shocked. And I never tried it.

Interviewee A: The most interesting the most shocking experience that I encountered in Tallinn was when I as a professor in university that wears a T shirt yellow t shirt with a tattoo on her body and it was very shocking for me because I expect I expect the professor to wear a suit with tie and the wear in a very formal dress but yeah it was very shocking for me. So, I understand that they don't really care about the formal dress. They wear the dress in a way that they feel comfy about it.

Moderator: Tell me about your first experience, about the first time you visited a shop here in Tallinn, what visible things were different?

Interviewee E: The first thing which I absorbed my attention was that in Tallinn, there is no small market for buying groceries things and even for buy some small, for example I don't know potato or something we have to go to the big shopping mall and hypermarket and I think it is a bit harder

and I prefer those small market that makes shopping much easier, As we have in Iran. Because it is really when we are thinking that just for buying a small things we have to be prepared to go to that big and walk a lot because the entrance and the exit door is not the same so we have to go and come back and there is a bit harder and I prefer the smaller one.

Moderator: So, you used to do more grocery stuff in Iran rather than Tallinn?

Interviewee E: It was easier If we wanted to do it. Actually, the same as clothes I think, even for clothes here, there are a lot of brand shop which are really big and if you want only for example one small piece of clothes, there is no particular shop to go there and so you have to go to that large shops.

Moderator: So, it means that in Iran you could buy you could go to these small shops around your neighbour so you you didn't have to buy a lot of stuff at the same time because you know that the place is near but here in Tallinn you need to do all your grocery shopping at once.

Interviewee E: Exactly

Interviewee B: In continuing this discussion I would say it is it is different for me. For groceries yes, I believe that if it's like a really close and small shop that that I could like reach really fast and then it's a lot better. I prefer small shops but in terms of clothing or other stuff I really prefer like big shops and as I said like a specific Markets like Zara Mango or whatever brand it is. Then I go there, and I know what I'm looking for and so I spend a lot less time actually than the those bazaars like in Iran like I don't know 50 small shops selling shoes that you have to like look everywhere because it is you don't know like maybe other next shop has better quality shoes or whatever. So, for me it is like this.

Interviewee C: So, what I found different in Tallinn is that shopkeepers were not very friendly or like not very chatty or like interactive so they were very like if you ask something they would answer but not really into hello and stuff like that. Even when you pay, they didn't really talk with you about anything but generally not even only in Iran but everywhere else. It's more like they do some small talks but here it wasn't the case.

Moderator: Does it affect your shopping behaviour? Like do you buy from that shop that you see that kind of cashier?

Interviewee C: well in a supermarket, I don't care because you just take your things and just pay if she or he doesn't reply to your hi then just whatever but when I need some help or something and they are not very helpful like also I had the experience that I asked for something or asked for help and I just got very short not very descriptive answers, it's like could you please I don't know check if you have this in large or something and they are like No I can't. But they could explain that well we don't have the system to look for it or something at least give some reason for it. In

this cases I prefer not to go to that specific shopping mall or branch but maybe other branches are better.

Interviewee A: If I want to speak about differentiation I can say that the first time I entered to the shop market in Tallinn, I Observed that all the products had the price label and also the interesting thing was vendor machines that we can scan our products automatically and it was like self-paying and we don't need a salesman anymore.

Interviewee D: The thing that I was really stunned when I was when I entered the shop in Tallinn was that I couldn't find the single word in English and it was really disappointing because I thought that at least one word maybe similar to English and I would I had to ask different people that what does shampoo mean in Estonian and or are there shampoos or are there conditioners or what soap. Or I could recognize from the shapes or from my previous knowledge that for example this brand that this name is shampoo or this is soap and so on and that was really challenging for me. That's it.

Moderator: So now I would like to know how did you cope with those differences.

Interviewee E: Actually, I had to be. I had to cope with these differences because there's no other way. So, I decided to write it right down what I need during the week and when I am free, I go and do shopping generally not small things as I did in Iran. This is the way that I try that I used to cope with it.

Interviewee B: To me it was not a challenge to for other products rather than groceries all the groceries has been a challenge for me that I do the same approach I just write down stuff and I go once a week to the grocery shop buy my stuff and I come home and that's it. I stored the money used. This is the only thing that I do right now.

Interviewee C: So, I'm I'm I've got used to not talk to the shopkeepers, so I just go and do my stuff don't bother to say even hello sometimes and I get shocked when they say hello and I'm like too shocked to reply on time and then it's too late to reply.

Interviewee A: About the price label Actually it was not a challenge for me it was just interesting and more trustable that I know the price before buying. And about the vendor machine I just try to learn how to work this very quickly.

Interviewee D: Well for me I was somehow taking some Estonian courses at the university, so I got familiar with simple words like the thing that we use in daily basis so slowly I got acquainted with these words and now I can do shopping with less challenges. That's it.

Moderator: So, the next question is that have you ever encountered any challenges buying your preferred products since arriving in Tallinn and how do you think that it can be addressed and they can cope with this challenge?

Interviewee B: Yeah. To me as I said before here product varieties are a lot more and I haven't actually encountered any challenges product wise so I'm really happy with the product varieties here.

Interviewee C: So, I had some some brands that I used to buy and then I couldn't find them here but then I got used to brand that I can find here. But I guess having like online shops that is translated because there is a lot of stuff that you can buy online but some of the websites weren't in English. But nowadays it's much better actually. So, it is fine.

Interviewee A: I had some problems with Asians food for example pomegranate paste which is used in an specific Persian food and I couldn't find here and also nuts which are very expensive here and actually I don't have any suggestion to fix it now.

Interviewee E: For example, for making some kind of our traditional food I had the challenge in finding the ingredients in Estonia and I usually buy them from Helsinki and I think if we can have more Asian or Turkish, it is OK with Turkish as well. Turkish store here which provide us with with more affordable these ingredients would be really good for, For me as least because I am more used to the Iranian traditional food than Estonian food

Moderator: And I guess that Estonia is getting more and more multicultural I think they can adjust, they can consider these kinds of products in their hyper markets.

Interviewee E: Because so many international people are coming there and it would be really good business like if they start, because I remember there is one store here and they say that we receive our ingredient from Germany. I said that. So, if you receive from Helsinki it would be much cheaper because in Helsinki cheaper than here. And they said that I don't know at the moment this is a situation you.

Interviewee D: All right. According to my experience everything was accessible here. I couldn't find any. I didn't find any difficulties to find my preferred let's say Stuff that I want to buy from food to beauty products I could find whatever I wanted to buy, and I don't think there's so much to do in this section. That's it.

Moderator: Thank you. OK. The next one is that. Do you guys consume by choice or by chance and do you have preferences. Or go with what is available.

Interviewee B: I definitely shop by choice whatever I need. And yeah it happens also sometimes that I see something on sale and crazy price and I'm like wow. Then I buy too. So, it's gonna be some chance but it happens rarely. My preference is to actually I go with the things that are available right now at the store because I hate online shopping, I really don't trust that. And maybe

just once in my life I actually went with that option. So yeah, I all the time shop from local shopping.

Interviewee C: I think some percentage of my shopping goes by chance. Depends on what is on display and seems interesting and I just try something new especially for groceries and food. I try a lot of new things and depending on if it catches my eyes or discount or something and for buying things I think if it's um for day to day things I buy what's available. But in some cases, I have like preferences that either I go to a different shop to get that specific thing. Like if they don't have it in Rimi and they have it in Maxima, I go to Maxima for that. And and also for more personal stuff like makeup clothes and stuff I even don't find it in shops I would buy online.

Interviewee A: First of all, uh I only go for shopping when I need something I don't for I don't go shopping. Just only for filling my free time or for entertainment. Yeah. But then I go for shopping. I mostly open for options, for example I go to buy jeans, but I come back with the fabric pants but. I don't limit myself to other better options.

Moderator: Do you have preferences for you, or you go with what's available?

Interviewee A: No as I said I go with my preferences but I it's still open to other options. I go for buying a pants, so I don't buy skirts. I am I finally I buy a pants but may be different type of pants.

Interviewee D: For me it's some kind of a mixture of both of them because I it depends on my priority. I usually have some preferences with special types of products but uh. For example, for some kind of let's say food stuff and so on, I don't have any preferences, so I go with the available products in the stores. And but for more important things I don't care. I care about the thing that I'm going to buy. And as I said before in the first questions, I said that it may happen that two months I search for a bag a special bag and I won't buy any kind of bag, so I have preferences

Interviewee E: For me uh mostly I this I prefer to go shopping when I need something but of course as Roxana said if I saw something very interesting or if I still find something that I was looking for it even Even if I don't need at the moment, I will buy it. Because always I have in my mind what I need but generally when I need, I go shopping. And about online things.

Moderator: Do you have preferences or you just for being available?

Interviewee E: At first my priority is going and try it whatever I need. I mean I see what I am buying but if I cannot find the recently I go for online shopping as well if I could then find the things that I am looking for. I search online and based on the situation. I could buy online as well doesn't fix that I should just buy when it is available.

Moderator: OK. Thank you.

Moderator: And the next question is that does money or income determine your preferences?

Interviewee B: Definitely it does. And I have no question about it.

Interviewee C: yeah, in some level it does, definitely.

Moderator: So, you buy everything according to your income.

Interviewee C: What is according my income? That's the thing. Because you always have some savings. You can spend even more than your one-month income on something. But is it like?

Moderator: But is that most of the time? Or do you find stuff affordable for yourself, and then you decide to buy them?

Interviewee C: Ok. So, the thing is that I didn't, no, ok, not in the sense that, the thing is that event, things that I can afford. I don't feel that, that's the level of my price. So, for me currently, I can afford a lot more expensive things, but I or I still buy cheaper ones because it's just how my mind is like used to prices. So, I don't pay more than, I don't know, for example, twenty euros for jeans. I've never paid I Think more than twenty euros for jeans. But I of course, can afford more than that. It's just I don't do it.

Moderator: Okay, thank you.

Interviewee A: um, definitely it does, but I never spend all of my money on the stuff that I need daily. There is stuff. But, yes, usually if I had more income, it had effect on my consumption.

Interviewee D: And for me, definitely money can role the consumption behaviour. And I and after that my son, actually I have to think about it before my priorities. So, but about him, I don't really care. What amount of my budget I am I spending on? But I can even spend more than my budget for him. But for myself, it's completely vice versa as a mother yeah. But for myself and my husband, we as parents are completely different.

Moderator: So, you sacrifice yourself?

Interviewee D: Yeah, I am a sacrifice mother. Yeah, no, because I think that he is a baby and he needs me and I have a responsibility to take care of him. So, I have some kind of situations that I

know that for example I have three hundred euros in my bank account and I have to spend half of it for my son only just because he doesn't have warm clothes in the winter. So I do it. It's not questionable, actually,

Interviewee E: for me for sure. Uh, income is really determining in my consuming culture. And I have to be I have to consider how much saving, how much money I have. It's very important.

Moderator: Okay. Do you ladies want to add anything?

Interviewee B: yeah, in general, um, as far as I see, the differences that have been in me that changed in my lifestyle, is that I right now spend on more things that I need more, and there are mostly sustainable, good for environment and not literally like all the time related to myself, my appearance and stuff like this, And this has really has been changing my lifestyle. So, and I think it's also because of my age, because I'm more grown up right now. I'm not a young twenty-four like lady anymore, but anyway, this is my conclusion of this comparison.

Interviewee D: Well, I didn't know all these things about my shopping behaviour and consumption behaviour. Thank you for providing this kind of opportunity for us Mahsa(moderator). Yeah, to think more about what do we, how do we behave? When we want to buy something. And it's really, let's say practical in the future so we can consider more about our choices and our consumption behaviour. Thank you, Mahsa.

Moderator: Thank you thank you guys.