

Factors Influencing the Purchasing Behavior via Social Media of Diasporas in Bahrain in Terms of Consumer Ethnocentrism and Acculturation

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Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing diasporas' purchasing behavior through social media platforms in terms of some variables such as consumer acculturation and ethnocentrism. The study was applied to diaspora customers of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian nationalities, residing in the Kingdom of Bahrain as a host country (n = 329).

The results of the study showed that social media platforms influenced the purchasing behavior of respondents, in terms of the types of consumer goods purchased, and the adopted purchasing behavior. "Cultural relevance" ranked first as an attraction method used by social media advertisements for the study sample. The results concluded that the levels of acculturation and enthusiasm variables among diaspora tended to be "moderate".

The hypothesis testing showed that some demographic factors had statistically significant differences in diaspora's attitudes towards purchasing through social media platforms, acculturation levels, and ethnocentrism. The study showed that consumer acculturation and ethnocentrism positively affected the purchasing behavior through social media platforms among the study sample. The study revealed a number of persuasive methods to be employed to market local brands among diasporas residing in any host country.

Keywords: purchasing behavior, diasporas, social media, ethnocentrism, acculturation, Bahrain

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem Statement

Social media has become the most crucial medium for brands to engage with consumers (Muhammad et al., 2022). Brands are dedicated to providing positive marketing experiences that engage customers through social media. Many studies have been conducted on the impact of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of various target audiences. However, the purchasing experience of diaspora consumers through social media, in light of ethnocentrism and acculturation, has not been adequately studied, especially among Arab researchers.

"Diaspora" refers to minority communities that migrate to other countries and maintain a sense of nostalgia for their home countries. Statistics on global diasporas gained global attention with the significant rise in international migration (Palomino-Tamayo et al., 2022).

While the term "diasporas" is interlaced with other terms such as "ethnic communities," "immigrants," and "refugees", diasporas are a significant market segment in any multicultural country and may be charged with feelings of belonging to their homeland, which influences their marketing behavior (Papadopoulos, Banna, and Murphy, 2017).

Consumer acculturation is "the process by which individuals learn and adopt cultural norms and values that are different from those they acquired during their upbringing" (Reza et al., 2023, p. 3089). That is to say that acculturation includes cultural adaptation in response to others' cultures, especially with the diaspora. In this regard, several studies have indicated that acculturation affects the purchasing behavior of diasporas when buying products from host countries (Czarnecka & Schivinski, 2019).

Consumer ethnocentrism is "consumer beliefs about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing products made abroad. Accordingly, ethnocentric consumers may prefer to purchase from local brands over foreign brands to support their country's national economy as a means of deepening loyalty to their homeland" (Wilkins et al., 2019, p.1310).

Consumer ethnocentrism “provides a sense of identity and belonging, and an understanding of acceptable or unacceptable purchasing behavior” (Čvirik, 2023, p. 100; Carson, 2024).

Accordingly, acculturation and ethnocentrism are two pivotal factors in consumer purchasing decisions and preferences. Thus, this research investigates the factors that influence social media purchasing behavior of diaspora consumers in Bahrain, in light of consumer acculturation and ethnocentrism.

1.2 Diaspora in Bahrain

Official statistics issued by the Bahrain e-Government, in 2023, stated that the total population of Bahrain was “1,577,059.” The number of Bahraini citizens was “719,333” (46.1% of the total population), while the number of non-Bahraini residents was “785,032” (53.9%).

In 2024, the total population of Bahrain was approximately “1,804,820” (www.bahrain.bh, 2024). The overall population distribution in Bahrain is as follows: “Bahrainis 46%, Asians 45.5%, Arabs 4.7%, Africans 1.6%, Europeans 1%, others 1.2% (including GCC, North and South American, and Oceanian nationals)” (www.indexmundi.com, 2024). According to the Information and eGovernment Authority (IGA), the population of Asian countries in Bahrain ranked first in the data for the distribution of non-Bahraini nationalities during 2024 (gulfmigration.grc.net, 2024).

According to “ceicdata.com” (2024), the number of non-Bahraini residents reached “849,707,000” people in 2023. This number increased compared to the previous year (835,525,000 people in 2022). As shown in Figure 1, the number of non-Bahrainis has been increasing annually, especially since 2013 to mid-2017, and from mid-2020 to the end of 2023.

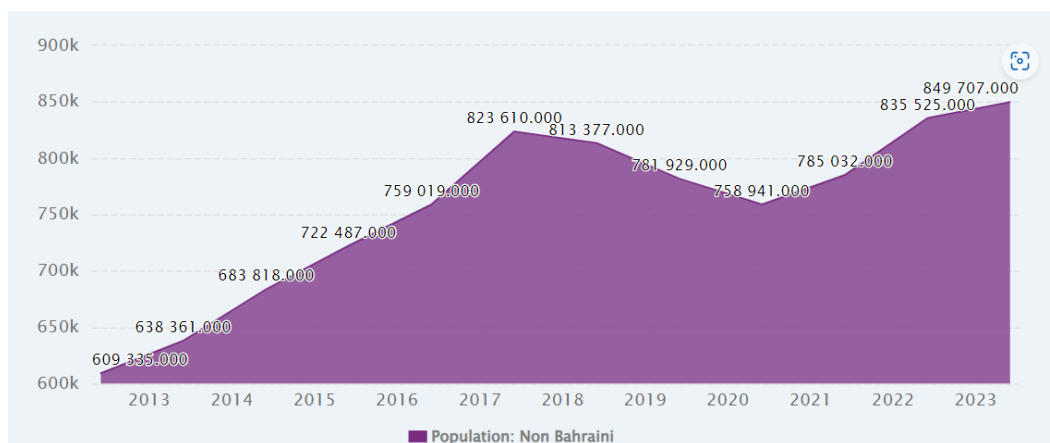


Figure 1. Non-Bahraini statistics from 2013 to 2023

Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/bahrain/population-by-age/population-non-bahraini>

The labor market regulatory authority in Bahrain revealed that “the foreign workers' employability rate in Bahrain reached “609,028” workers by the end of 2023. Non-Bahraini employment increased by an annual rate of 8.1% compared to the same quarter of last year”. (lmra.gov.bh, 2024).

Based on the above statistics regarding diasporas' status in Bahrain, diasporas are a significant market segment in a multicultural country and a destination of growing immigration waves like Bahrain. As this study focuses on the factors influencing the diaspora consumers purchasing behavior on social media, the social media using statistics for Bahrain in 2024, according to the DataReportal's report, shows that “there were 1.45 million active social media user identities in Bahrain in January 2024” (datareportal.com, 2024), which means that there is a high level of social media usage between both Bahrainis and non-Bahrainis.

1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 Diaspora Purchasing Behavior on Social Media

Saleh et al. (2023) examined the attitudes of diaspora consumers toward purchasing products on different social media platforms and the way their attitudes influence online purchasing behavior. The results showed that diaspora consumers' attitudes towards social media had a significant impact on their purchasing behavior in terms of mediating factors such as preferences for homeland products, cultural identification, and acculturation.

Raza et al. (2022) demonstrated that diasporas who had positive attitudes toward purchasing social media products were more likely to engage in impulsive online purchases, especially for domestic products. The study also revealed that cultural identity, social media addiction, and acculturation level were mediating factors.

Khan et al. (2022) investigated the diaspora consumers' attitudes towards purchasing products on social media. The study found that positive attitudes among diasporas toward products displayed on social media were not always associated with purchase decisions, highlighting the importance of mediating factors such as brand trust, perceived product quality, and heavy social media use.

Palomino-Tamayo et al. (2022) argued that diaspora consumers in many host countries, who have lower masculine traits, feel a higher level of individualism, and live in geographically distant areas from their home countries, seek to consume nostalgic products more intensively in addition to purchasing products offered through social media.

Weaver et al. (2017) concluded that Chinese diaspora customers had a higher degree of cultural connectedness with their homeland, which affected their online consumption behavior.

1.3.2 Diasporas Acculturation and Purchasing Behaviour on Social Media

Much literature considerably agreed that the acculturation process affects the social media consumption behavior of immigrants, depending on the type of product (Das & Jebarajakirthy, 2020). For example, clothing and food have a high cultural inculcation based on their upbringing, which may vary from country to country. Thus, the purchase behavior of foreign products via social media is significantly influenced by the compatibility of products with the culture and values of the consumer.

Meanwhile, Reza et al. (2023) found that religious values positively influenced online purchasing behavior of Indonesian Muslims residing in the Korean peninsula, regarding foreign products in terms of acculturation. Lim et al. (2022) also found that the intention to purchase halal food products online among non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia was influenced by acculturation factors.

Ogden et al. (2004) recommended that marketers should understand how endogenous cultures can influence the social media purchasing behavior of immigrant consumers in the United States. However, Carson (2024) argued that effective communication via social media can facilitate immigrants' integration into the new host culture.

1.3.3 Diaspora Ethnocentrism and The Purchasing Behaviour on Social Media

Migliore et al. (2021) stated that many researchers investigated the role of ethnocentrism in affecting consumers' purchasing behavior for domestic and foreign products on social media.

Pratono & Arli (2020) found that consumers' ethnocentrism significantly influenced their social media purchasing behavior, while Čvirik (2023) found that ethnocentrism drives local brands to develop social media marketing strategies that encourage the purchase of local products.

Shoham & Gavish (2016) argued that ethnocentrism consumers believe that foreign brands offer lower quality products, expressing a sense that it is wrong to support foreign brands over local products. Jiang & Bajde (2020) illustrated that higher levels of engagement on social media with local content and cultural identity influence were associated with stronger ethnocentrism and a higher attitude toward purchasing products from the home country.

Shankarmahesh et al. (2004) demonstrated that ethnic values may be influenced by demographic, social, psychological, and political factors, which in turn influence the tendency to purchase local and foreign products online.

A number of studies examined the influence of ethnocentrism on online purchasing behavior among diasporas and immigrants. Carson (2024) argued that recent immigrants were more likely to choose ethnic brands online than acculturated immigrants who had lived in the host country for a long time and were assimilated into its culture. Cowie et al. (2021) concluded that diasporas' ethnocentrism positively affected intentions to purchase products from home countries via online platforms and found that this relationship was moderated by acculturation and perceived quality of home products.

Gupta et al. (2022) highlighted that increased social media users in the home country enhanced ethnic orientations among diaspora consumers, and found that ethnic orientations, length of stay in the host country, and degree of acceleration factors led to increased purchasing behavior for local products.

Supphellen & Rittenburg (2001) found that immigrants in Poland involuntarily adapted to purchasing foreign products online that were cheaper without taking consumer ethnocentrism into account.

1.4 The Theoretical Framework

A number of studies related to the current study have employed different theoretical frameworks such as "acculturation theory", "social identity theory", "cultural capital theory", and "consumer culture theory". The current study employed Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as a theoretical framework to examine the impact of consumer ethnocentrism and diaspora acculturation on social media purchasing behavior. Both consumer ethnocentrism and acculturation are directly related to culture, and ethnocentrism means looking at the world from a cultural perspective. Ethnocentrism involves an individual's cultural beliefs and ideas that can have significant effects on an individual's behavior. Acculturation is the cultural learning that occurs when individuals interact

with a new culture. Thus, “culture is the fundamental element of acculturation and ethnocentrism.”

The CCT theory was founded by Gilles Deleuze and updated by Manuel DeLanda in the late 1970s after studying the relationships between individuals, culture and society (Nail, 2017). In marketing studies, CCT examines the intersection between consumer behavior, the market and culture (de Oliveira et al., 2023). It provides symbolic meanings for the consumption of specific brands, in terms of personal characteristics influenced by the surrounding social and cultural specificities (Dey et al., 2019). This means that culture can influence consumer behavior towards specific brands. This theory emphasizes the influence of cultural and social complexities on individual consumption. Pinto et al. (2015) highlighted that recent consumer research has focused on the sociocultural aspects of consumption.

The CCT theory explores the different cultural aspects and orientations of consumer purchasing behavior, which is consistent with the objectives of the current study.

1.5 The Study Scope

This study aims to study the factors affecting the purchasing behavior through social media among a sample of diasporas in Bahrain. These factors included the attitude towards purchasing products through social media, acculturation, ethnocentrism, and the influence of some demographic factors.

1.6 Study Questions and Hypotheses

1.6.1 Study Questions

Q1: What is the impact of social media on diasporas’ purchasing behaviour?

Q2: What are the attractive factors that brands employ in their social media advertisements to attract diaspora consumers in Bahrain?

1.5.2 Study hypotheses

H1: There are statistically significant differences in the impact of demographic factors of diasporas, including age, gender, educational level, job, and number of years of migration in the host country, on the attitude toward purchasing through social media, acculturation level, and ethnocentrism level.

H2: Consumer acculturation positively affects the purchasing behavior of diasporas on social media.

H3: Consumer ethnocentrism positively affects the purchasing behavior of diasporas on social media.

2. Methodology

The study population consisted of diaspora consumers, above the age of 18, who actively engage on social media platforms. The study author selected a sample of diaspora from South Asian countries, including Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Indians, residing in Bahrain as a host country such as Dr.

The study author stated that the migration of South Asians to the Kingdom of Bahrain began in the late last quarter of the nineteenth century. In recent years, Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis have become the largest diaspora groups in Bahrain (en.wikipedia.org, 2024). Accordingly, the study focused on these three groups only.

The study employed the snowball sampling method, given the large size of the study population. The snowball sampling method is widely used when the research population is imprecise or difficult to specify (Kochanska et al., 2022). The author asked the questionees to forward the questionnaire link to other friends from the same countries.

The data collection process from the study sample was based on an online survey conducted via Google Forms, between January 10 and April 12, 2024, in English and Urdu by native speakers. The study author pre-tested the questionnaire on a sample of 40 diaspora communities in Bahrain selected from the target population. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, Spearman-Brown Correlation Coefficient, and Guttman Split-Half Coefficient were used to statistically verify the reliability and validity of the study questionnaire, including the scales.

Table 1. Measuring the Reliability and Validity of the Study Questionnaire

The scale	Number of statements in the scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Guttman Split-Half Coefficient
Attitude towards purchasing behavior on social media	10	.742	.695	.684
The degree of consumer acculturation	11	.705	.679	.679
Degree of Consumer Ethnocentrism	7	.893	.884	.883

Table 1 showed that the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged between (0.705) and (0.893), and its value for the total study scales was (0.860). The value of Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient ranged between (0.679) and (0.884), and its value for the total study scales was (0.701). The value of Guttman's coefficient ranged between (0.679) and (0.883), and its value for the total study scales was (0.701), which are high values that indicate the stability and validity of the study questionnaire.

In general, a stability coefficient of 0.70 or more is considered acceptable in social science research (Elgammal, 2023). Some recommended modifications were incorporated according to the results of the pre-tested questionnaire, to enhance its readability and clarity.

The questionnaire was then distributed online via WhatsApp, and the same communities abroad were asked to forward the same link to their friends of their nationalities. The total number of participants in this survey was about 329 respondents, including 122 Indians, 105 Bangladeshis and 102 Pakistanis. No respondent was excluded from the study sample, because the questionnaire questions do not move the respondent to the next question, in case he provided insufficient information for the question he is answering. The study variables were measured, where a five-point Likert scale was used, as shown in Tables (3), (5), (7), to measure consumer ethnocentrism, acculturation and purchasing behavior via social media.

3. Results

3.1 Demographics

Table 2 showed that 70% of the study sample was males and 30% were females, and their ages ranged from 18 to 60+. The highest percentage of the study sample was concentrated in the age “from 36- 60 years” (58.3%), “university level” (52.6%), “employed” (65.7), “medium socioeconomic level” (57.8%), and those who lived in Bahrain “from 10 to under 20 years” (59.0%).

Socio-economic level was measured based on indicators including annual income, prestige of parents’ jobs, educational attainment, and neighborhood income.

Table 2. Demographics of The Participants

Variables	Sub-Groups	Indians N=122		Pakistanis N= 105		Bangladeshis N=102		Total N=329		X2	df	p- Value
		NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%			
Gender	Males	86	70.5	76	72.4	68	66.7	230	70	-	-	-
	Females	36	29.5	29	27.6	34	33.3	99	30			
Age- Group	18- 35	28	23	21	20	19	18.6	68	20.7	-	-	-
	36- 60	72	59	65	62	55	54	192	58.3			
	60+	22	18	19	18	28	27.4	69	21			
Education Level	High School	45	36.9	34	32.3	65	63.7	144	43.8	5.23	4	0.251
	University	70	57.4	66	62.9	37	36.3	173	52.6			
	Postgraduate	7	5.61	5	4.8	0	0	12	3.6			
Employment Status	Student	20	16.4	15	14.3	3	0.3	38	11.5	1.97	6	0.351
	Employed	72	59	62	59	82	80.4	216	65.7			
	Unemployed	6	4.9	13	12.4	9	0.9	28	8.5			
	Retired	16	13.1	11	10.5	6	0.6	33	10			
	Student and employed	8	6.6	4	3.8	2	0.2	14	4.3			
Socioeconomic level	High	17	13.9	25	23.8	5	0.5	47	14.2	7.35	3	0.322
	Medium	72	59	66	62.9	52	51	190	57.8			
	Low	33	27.1	14	13.3	45	48.5	92	28			
Number of years of immigration in Bahrain	Under 10 years	28	23	18	17.1	16	15.7	62	18.8	7.96	3	0.021
	From 10 to under 20 years	45	36.9	74	70.5	75	73.5	194	59			
	20+	49	40.1	13	12.4	11	10.8	73	22.2			

*Statistically significant difference, (p < 0.05).

3.2 The Results of The Study Questions

Q1- What is the impact of social media on diasporas’ purchasing behavior?

The impact of social media on the purchasing behavior of the diaspora in Bahrain was measured through:

- Determining whether the purchasing behavior of diasporas changed when they migrated from their home country to the host country (Bahrain):

The collected data showed that (39.7%) of the study sample stated that their purchasing habits were not affected by the relocation process, while the remaining percentage (60.3%) stated that their purchasing habits changed to some extent in terms of “focusing on purchasing basic products more than luxury products” (37.2%), “tendency to save on purchasing and reduce consumption” (25.7%), “tendency to try new and local Bahraini products that they had not used before in the homeland” (19.1%), “inability to purchase preferred national products due to their unavailability in the Bahraini market” (11.2%), and “income and general economic conditions in the host country” (6.8%).

- Methods used by diasporas in Bahrain to engage in purchasing behavior:

The collected data indicated that the methods included “direct purchase from stores and markets” (27.8%), “hybrid purchasing methods” (22.7%), “purchase via social media” (17.6%), “e-commerce platforms” (13.4%), “mobile apps and m-commerce” (9.5%), “marketplaces and online platforms” (6.7%), and “subscription services” (2.3%).

- The most trusted social media platform that diasporas in Bahrain relied on to purchase products:

The data collected showed that Instagram ranked first with a percentage of (64.3%), which is a significant difference from other social media platforms, followed by WhatsApp by joining groups that promote many products with a percentage of (32.3%).

- Types of consumer goods purchased by diasporas via social media:

The aggregated data showed that “convenience products” were the most frequently purchased consumer goods by diasporas in Bahrain via social media (55.3%), followed by “shopping products” (32.2%), “specialty products” (10.1%), and “junk products” (2.4%).

The sub-products that ranked first, within the previous four main categories of consumer goods purchased by diasporas via social media, included “food and beverage” in the “convenience products” category, “clothing and accessories” in the “shopping products” category, “nostalgia products” in the “specialty products” category, and “life insurance” in the “junk products” category.

Q2-What are the attractive factors that brands employ in their social media advertisements to attract diaspora consumers in Bahrain?

The data collected revealed a number of appeals that brands’ advertising uses to drive social media purchasing behavior among diaspora consumers in Bahrain, as follows: “cultural relevance” (42.3%), “offering special offers” (40.6%), “providing advertising content in the diaspora’s native languages” (32.5%), “evoking a sense of nostalgia by aligning products with the cultural heritage of diasporas” (29.6%), “emphasizing the problem-solving aspects of the product” (25.7%), “using interactive ads” (23.5%), “using social influencers” (20.7%), “professional design of social media ads” (18.6%), “showing how the product can facilitate diasporas’ integration into Bahraini culture” (17.7%), and “respecting the rights, dignity, and equality of others” (16.8%). Respondents were allowed to select more than one answer for this question.

3.3 Measuring the Independent Variables

The independent variables for this include consumer culture, ethnocentrism, and attitude toward purchasing behavior on social media. The author used a five-point Likert scale to measure these variables as follows:

- Measuring the attitude of diasporas towards purchasing behavior on social media

Table 3 showed the 5- point scale that measures the diasporas’ attitude towards purchasing products on social media.

Table 3. The Scale of the Diasporas’ Attitude towards Purchasing Behavior on Social Media

Agreement level	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		SMA	Standard Deviation
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Scale Statements												
1- I prefer purchasing products promoted on social media rather than traditional media.	75	22.8	66	20.0	64	19.5	52	15.8	72	21.9	3.589	.8400
2- Social media browsing helps me discover new useful products I want to buy.	115	35.0	89	26.1	32	10	51	15.5	42	12.8	4.166	.6799
3- I am likely to purchase a specific product if I find positive reviews and good testimonials on it on social media.	110	33.4	82	25	52	16	48	14.5	37	11.2	3.458	1.0207
4- Usually, I see that interacting with sellers on social media positively impacts my buying decisions.	105	32	91	28	61	18.5	42	12.7	30	0.9	3.815	.8469
5- Usually, I buy recommended products based on my family and friends' recommendations (WOM) rather than depending on social media advertisements.	137	41.6	89	27	47	14.3	30	0.9	26	0.8	2.921	1.0519
6- I don't trust buying products based on the recommendations of social media influencers, as most of them are untrustworthy.	37	11.2	57	17.3	88	27	97	29.4	50	15.2	2.792	1.2073
7- I do not trust buying unknown/new products through social media.	72	22	74	22.5	63	19.1	35	10.6	85	26.1	2.926	1.4347
8- I prefer going out and shopping in person rather than shopping for products through social media.	75	22.8	65	19.7	32	10	92	28	65	19.8	3.662	.9607
9- All sponsored content and promotional products on social media are untrustworthy.	65	19.8	55	16.7	45	13.7	82	25	82	25	3.704	.8573
10- Usually, browsing social media leads me to buying unneeded products impulsively.	45	13.7	32	10	10	13.7	92	28	128	39	2.949	1.3743

N= 329

Based on the aggregate scale of the respondents’ answers to the scale presented in Table 3, the level of the respondents’ attitudes towards purchasing products from social media was determined according to Table 4.

Table 4. The Aggregate Scale of Attitude Types towards Purchasing Behavior on Social Media

Attitude types	NO.	%
Positive	162	49.2
Neutral	97	29.5
Negative	70	21.3

Table 4 shows that the study authors used an aggregate scale to convert the detailed level of the variable “attitude towards purchasing behavior on social media” to a general level. The aggregate level refers to the level at which the

collected data are combined or summarized, “which may limit the ability to analyze data at a lower level of detail” (LeBreton et al., 2023). Table 3 demonstrated the overall scale of the study sample’s attitude towards purchasing via social media, which tends to be “positive” (49.2%).

Table 5. The 5-point Likert scale of the diasporas’ acculturation level

Agreement level Scale Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		SMA	Standard Deviation
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1. I spend most of my social gathering time in Bahrain with people from my home country rather than other nationalities.	142	43.2	89	27.1	32	10	22	0.7	44	13.4	4.658	.9892
2. I care about developing new close friendships with Bahrainis rather than others from my home country.	115	35	98	30	23	0.7	48	14.6	45	13.7	4.241	.6586
3. I often seek advice only from people belonging to my home country rather than others.	126	38.3	88	26.7	65	19.8	23	0.7	27	0.8	2.654	1.256
4. I prefer to use my original language when speaking with my family, friends, and co-workers mostly, and I have no intention of learning the Arabic/ Bahraini language.	135	41	78	23.7	67	20.4	22	0.7	27	0.8	3.892	.9654
5. I often watch movies and TV programs that belong to my home country more than dubbed or translated Arabic ones.	145	44	92	28	15	0.5	28	0.9	49	14.9	2.856	1.236
6. I often listen to music and radio stations related to my home country rather than Bahraini ones.	132	40.1	101	30.7	17	0.5	22	0.07	57	17.3	2.865	1.782
7. I have adapted well to the Bahraini culture, traditions, and values, reflecting them in my behavior, even if they differ from those in my home country.	62	18.8	46	14	78	23.7	98	30	45	13.7	2.965	1.7852
8. I’m interested in following up on news related to my home country rather than those associated with Bahrain.	88	26.7	47	14.3	100	30.4	52	15.8	42	12.8	3.632	.6984
9. I often wear the traditional clothes that belong to my home country’s culture rather than other styles.	115	35	97	29.5	56	17.0	23	0.7	38	11.6	3.912	.8687
10. I feel a sense of belonging to the Bahraini community as a culturally diverse society.	52	15.8	72	21.9	54	16.4	99	30.1	52	15.8	3.456	.9782
11. I am planning to stay for a long time in Bahrain, and I am unwilling to return to my home country in the future.	87	26.4	90	27.4	22	0.7	89	27	41	12.5	4.258	.8631

N=329

Table 6. The Aggregate Scale of the Diaspora Acculturation Level

Consumer Acculturation Level	N	%
High	72	21.9
Moderate	179	45.4
Low	78	23.7

Table 6 shows that the aggregate scale of the study sample acculturation level, which tends to be a “moderate level” (45.4%).

Table 7. The 5- Points Scale of the Study Sample Ethnocentrism level

Agreement level Scale Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		SMA	Standard Deviation
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1- I am willing to pay a slightly higher price to buy products made in my home country instead of those from other countries, including Bahrain.	89	27	48	14.6	122	37.1	45	13.7	25	0.8	4.856	.9584
2- purchasing products from my home country is essential to me rather than quality, as it supports its economy.	89	27.1	55	16.7	101	30.7	37	11.2	47	14.3	4.742	.6658
3- I feel proud when I buy products from my home country instead of those belonging to other countries.	90	27.4	75	22.8	72	22.8	34	10.3	58	17.6	2.658	1.254
4- The products made in my home country are of higher quality than others.	87	26.4	69	21	107	32.5	45	13.6	90	27.4	3.456	.9632
5- I prioritize getting the cheapest products. It doesn't matter if they are made in my country or not.	101	30.7	89	27	25	0.8	58	17.6	59	17.9	2.896	1.632
6- I don't feel that products from my home country are higher in quality than Bahraini or international products.	47	14.3	55	16.7	125	38	43	13.1	59	18	2.123	1.456
7- I am morally obligated to buy products from my home country rather than foreign-made products.	45	13.7	66	20.0	103	31.3	57	17.3	58	17.6	2.896	1.5632

N=329

Table 8. The Aggregate Scale of the Consumer Ethnocentrism level

Consumer Ethnocentrism level	N	Level
High	98	29.8%
Moderate	175	53.2%
Low	56	17.0%

Table 8 illustrated that the study sample's ethnocentrism level is “moderate” (53.2%).

3.4 The Results of Study Hypotheses

H1/1 There are statistically significant differences in the impact of demographic factors of diasporas, including age, gender, educational level, job, and number of years of migration in the host country, on the attitude toward purchasing through social media.

Table 9. Differences between the Level of the Diasporas' Attitude towards Purchasing Behavior on Social Media Due to the Influence of the Demographic Factors

Independent Variable	Sub-Groups	dependent Variable	No.	SMA	T. Test Value	Df	p-Value	Result																																																																															
Gender	Males	The diasporas' purchasing behaviour on social media.	230	5.4823	1.851	327	0.001	Approved																																																																															
	Females		99	6.523					Independent Variable	Sub-Groups	No.	SMA	ANOVA (F)	Df	p-Value	Result	Age- Group	18- 35	68	5.351	1.781	327	0.002	Approved	36- 60	192	5.654	60+	69	6.524	Education Level	High School	144	4.351	1.756	327	0.125	Rejected	University	173	4.654	Postgraduate	12	4.367	Employment Status	Student	38	6.654	1.654	327	0.101	Rejected	Employed	216	5.654	Unemployed	28	4.365	Retired	33	4.365	Student and employed	14	4.891	Socioeconomic level	High	47	5.654	1.781	327	0.132	Rejected	Medium	190	5.691	Low	92	7.651	number of years of immigration in Bahrain	Under 10 years	62	5.621	1.984	327	0.021	Approved	From 10 to under 20 years
Independent Variable	Sub-Groups		No.	SMA	ANOVA (F)	Df	p-Value	Result																																																																															
Age- Group	18- 35		68	5.351	1.781	327	0.002	Approved																																																																															
	36- 60		192	5.654																																																																																			
	60+		69	6.524																																																																																			
Education Level	High School		144	4.351	1.756	327	0.125	Rejected																																																																															
	University		173	4.654																																																																																			
	Postgraduate		12	4.367																																																																																			
Employment Status	Student		38	6.654	1.654	327	0.101	Rejected																																																																															
	Employed		216	5.654																																																																																			
	Unemployed		28	4.365																																																																																			
	Retired		33	4.365																																																																																			
	Student and employed		14	4.891																																																																																			
Socioeconomic level	High	47	5.654	1.781	327	0.132	Rejected																																																																																
	Medium	190	5.691																																																																																				
	Low	92	7.651																																																																																				
number of years of immigration in Bahrain	Under 10 years	62	5.621	1.984	327	0.021	Approved																																																																																
	From 10 to under 20 years	194	6.621																																																																																				
	20+	73	7.361																																																																																				

Table 9 shows statistically significant differences between males and females regarding their purchasing behavior via social media, as the value of the (t) test reached (1.851), at a significance level (P) of (0.001). These differences were in favor of the female category, which had the highest average (6.523), meaning that females were the most active in practicing purchasing behavior via various social media platforms.

Table 9 also demonstrates statistically significant differences between the age groups of the study sample regarding their purchasing behavior via social media (F = 1.781, P = .002). These differences were in favor of the oldest age group (60+). The same table also showed statistically significant differences in the number of years of migration to Bahrain on purchasing behavior via social media (F=1.984, P-value=0.021). These statistical differences were in favor of those with the longest migration period to Bahrain (20+).

H1/2- There are statistically significant differences in the impact of demographic factors of diasporas, including age, gender, educational level, job, and number of years of migration in the host country, on acculturation level.

Table 10 shows that all demographic factors of diasporas, including age, gender, educational level, job, and number of years of migration in the host country, have statistically significant differences in the degree of their acculturation. There is a tendency for young male diasporas, those with higher education, those with higher socio-economic levels, those who work, and have immigrated to Bahrain for more than 20 years to be more adaptable than other categories.

H1/3 There are statistically significant differences in the impact of demographic factors of diasporas, including age, gender, educational level, job, and number of years of migration in the host country, on ethnocentrism level.

Table 10. Differences between the Level of Diasporas Acculturation due to the Influence of Demographic Factors

Independent Variable	Sub-Groups	dependent Variable	No.	SMA	T. Test Value	Df	p-Value	Result
Gender	Males	Acculturation level.	230	6.325	1.874	327	0.002	Approved
	Females		99	5.782				
Independent Variable	Sub-Groups		No.	SMA	ANOVA (F)	Df	p-Value	Result
Age- Group	18- 35		68	6.391	1.652	327	0.002	Approved
	36- 60		192	5.687				
	60+		69	4.879				
Education Level	High School		144	4.465	1.687	327	0.001	Approved
	University		173	4.456				
	Postgraduate		12	6.375				
Employment Status	Student		38	5.654	1.521	327	0.003	Approved
	Employed		216	6.654				
	Unemployed		28	4.365				
	Retired	33	4.365					
	Student and employed	14	4.891					
Socioeconomic level	High	47	7.123	1.431	327	0.002	Approved	
	Medium	190	5.359					
	Low	92	5.361					
number of years of immigration in Bahrain	Under 10 years	62	5.632	1.654	327	0.021	Approved	
	From 10 to under 20 years	194	6.852					
	20+	73	7.635					

Table 11. The Statistical Differences between the Level of the Diasporas' Ethnocentrism due to the Influence of Demographic Factors

Independent Variable	Sub-Groups	dependent Variable	No.	SMA	T. Test Value	Df	p-Value	Result
Gender	Males	Ethnocentrism level.	230	5.483	1.875	327	0.654	Rejected
	Females		99	6.523				
Independent Variable	Sub-Groups		No.	SMA	ANOVA (F)	Df	p-Value	Result
Age- Group	18- 35		68	5.351	1.782	327	0.752	Rejected
	36- 60		192	5.654				
	60+		69	6.524				
Education Level	High School		144	4.351	1.777	327	0.961	Rejected
	University		173	4.654				
	Postgraduate		12	4.367				
Employment Status	Student		38	6.654	1.964	327	0.654	Rejected
	Employed		216	5.654				
	Unemployed		28	4.365				
	Retired	33	4.365					
	Student and employed	14	4.891					
Socioeconomic level	High	47	5.654	1.652	327	0.961	Rejected	
	Medium	190	5.691					
	Low	92	7.651					
number of years of immigration in Bahrain	Under 10 years	62	6.698	1.978	327	0.001	Approved	
	From 10 to under 20 years	194	5.621					
	20+	73	5.387					

Table 11 shows that the demographic factors of diasporas did not have statistically significant differences in terms of the level of ethnocentrism, except for those who have the least number of years of migration to Bahrain (less than 10 years) (P = 0.001, F = 1.978).

H2: Consumer acculturation positively affects the purchasing behavior of diasporas on social media.

H3: Consumer ethnocentrism positively affects the purchasing behavior of diasporas on social media.

Table 12. The Impact of both Consumer Acculturation and Ethnocentrism on the Diasporas’ Purchasing Behaviour on Social Media.

H	Independent Variable	dependent Variable	R	R ²	F		Beta	T		Result
					Value	Sig.		Value	Sig.	
H2	Consumer Acculturation	The diasporas’ purchasing behaviour on social media.	.378	.157	41.743	.002	0.387	5.272	.002	Approved
H3	Consumer Ethnocentrism				.317	.132	11.546	.001	0.317	

Table 12 points out that the consumer acculturation variable positively affected the social media purchasing behavior of diasporas. The statistically significant F-value is 41.743 at $p < 0.05$. Regarding R² (S-squared), it means “the statistical measure in a regression model that determines the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable” (Figueiredo et al., 2011, p. 67).

The same table shows that the value of the consumer acculturation variable is 157, which indicated that the variance in social media purchasing behavior of diasporas due to the influence of the acculturation variable is 15.7%. T-value (5.272) also confirmed the continuous and significant effect of the consumer acculturation variable on social media purchasing behavior of diasporas. Thus, H2 is accepted.

Table 12) also points out that the consumer ethnocentrism variable positively affected diasporas’ social media purchasing behavior. The statistically significant F-value is 11.546 at $p < 0.05$. R² value is 11.546, which indicates that the variance in the social media purchasing behavior of the study sample affected by the ethnocentrism variable is about 13.2%. Moreover, T-value (3.273) consistently confirmed the ethnocentrism impact of the ethnocentrism variable on the purchasing behavior of diasporas. Thus, H3 is accepted.

4. Discussion

This study examined the factors influencing the purchasing behavior of diaspora consumers in Bahrain via social media, in terms of some variables such as consumer acculturation and ethnocentrism, while using the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as a theoretical framework.

The results showed that the purchasing behavior of diasporas was mostly influenced by moving to Bahrain (the host country), through focusing on “buying basic products more than luxury products” and “tendency to save on purchases and reduce consumption”. The influence of the financial security variable was prominent when explaining this result, as residing in a foreign country may be associated with a sense of uncertainty, such as job instability. Therefore, reducing consumption and focusing on purchasing basic products rather than other luxury products could provide security for any emergency situations that a diaspora faces. In addition, most diasporas send money to their families in addition to investing money in their home country.

The studies concluded that diasporas adopted a positive attitude towards purchasing via social media. The majority ranked Instagram as the first platform they used to purchase various products, due to the platform’s widespread popularity among Bahraini citizens over other social media platforms (Elgammal, 2023), in addition to the focus of Bahraini small businesses and enterprises on Instagram to promote various products.

The study also found that convenience products were the most popular consumer goods that diasporas in Bahrain used to purchase through social media, due to the lack of effort involved in the purchasing process and choosing between products, as consumers do not need to buy them in the store and instead buy them through the social media platforms that promote them.

The attractive factors in advertising that motivated diasporas’ behavior to purchase through social media included cultural relevance, offering special offers, and providing advertising content in the native languages of the diaspora audience. The latter is a persuasive way to be used to market local products among diaspora consumers in any host country.

To measure the main independent variables, the results showed that diasporas had a positive attitude towards social media purchasing behavior. At the same time, their levels of acculturation and ethnocentrism were “moderate”. Jo & Ozdenc (2121) conducted a similar study to the current study on the consumption choices of Chinese New Zealanders in terms of acculturation and ethnocentrism variables and found that the study sample had a high degree of acculturation, while the correlation between the degree of ethnocentrism and preference for ethnic businesses was negative. Therefore, an effective marketing strategy based on the degree of ethnocentrism and acculturation of diasporas should be developed to meet their needs as expected consumers.

The study tested three hypotheses, and the results showed that there are statistical differences between the level of

diasporas' attitude towards social media purchasing behavior due to demographic factors, including "gender", "age", and "number of years of migration to Bahrain". All demographic factors of diasporas had statistically significant differences in the level of acculturation of diasporas.

In this regard, the results showed that young male diasporas, those with higher education, those with higher socio-economic status, those who are employed, and those who have immigrated to Bahrain for more than twenty years tended to have higher levels of acculturation. This result is attributed to a number of considerations, including, for example, that females are more emotionally attached to their countries of origin than males, and that young migrants adapt more quickly to the culture of the host country than older migrants, which may positively affect their level of acculturation.

Moreover, higher levels of education led to higher levels of acculturation while searching for better job opportunities. The high socio-economic status of diasporas and working in good jobs allowed them to participate more fully in all social and recreational services in the host country, which might lead to enhanced acculturation. The length of time spent in the host country was also usually associated with higher levels of acculturation.

The study author found that demographic factors of diasporas did not show statistically significant differences in their level of ethnic intolerance except for those with the least number of years of migration to Bahrain. This might be attributed to the lack of familiarity, belonging and engagement in the local Bahraini community, which could lead to the reinforcement of ethnic prejudice. Josiasen et al. (2011) found that older immigrants tended to be more ethnically intolerant. In contrast, Weber et al. (2018) reported that older immigrants tended to be less ethnically intolerant and that there was a significant negative relationship between education level, income, race and gender factors in relation to their level of ethnic intolerance. The results of testing the second and third hypotheses showed that consumer acculturation and ethnocentrism positively affected diasporas' social media purchasing behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of several literature, including (Sesen et al., 2024; Xiuli et al., 2021; Carson, 2024; Choi & Feinberg, 2024), which emphasized the need to prioritize these variables when developing marketing strategies targeting the diasporas in Bahrain.

Finally, ethnocentrism was considered a lens for understanding diaspora preferences for products that align with their cultural identity, as it is a framework through which individuals evaluate products and brands. This perspective influences their purchasing decisions, as preferring products that align with their cultural identity enhances a sense of national belonging and pride in their heritage. For this reason, ethnocentrism and acculturation considerably motivated diasporas to engage with brands in host countries, which requires designing social media marketing strategies that influence their purchasing behavior while they reside in host countries.

5. Recommendations and Future Studies

Since studies on diasporas' consumption behavior are interdisciplinary in nature, more in-depth research is recommended on additional variables that influence their purchasing behavior in host countries such as consuming style, eating habits, food consumption habits, economic factors, individual beliefs, cultural influence, green consumption behavior, the impact of urbanization, legal and religious factors, integration into the hosted country, demographics of diasporas, ethnic identity.

It is also recommended to study the relationship between diasporas' reliance on social media and its role in changing attitude towards purchasing local products of the host country. This approach could be essential for developing marketing strategies that suit diasporas in any host country.

Since diaspora consumer spending plays a key role in stimulating economic growth of host countries, the impact of social media on diaspora purchasing behavior of local products remains a research gap, especially for countries with high migrant populations, such as Bahrain.

6. Limitation

This study was applied only to three categories of diaspora consumers in Bahrain, which means that the results can't be considered for other diaspora categories based on the differences in culture and consumer behavior.

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