



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF
SEX TOYS**

MSc. THESIS

Khalid KHURSHID

Nicosia

Khalid KHURSHID

FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF SEX TOYS

Nicosia
August,
2023

August, 2023

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF
SEX TOYS**

MSc. THESIS

Khalid KHURSHID

Supervisor


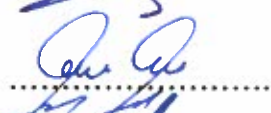

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet ERTUGAN

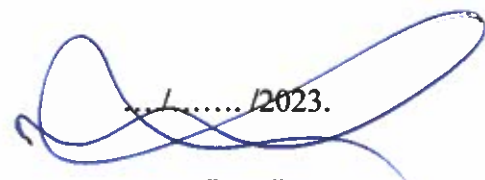
Nicosia

August, 2023


Approval

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Khalid Khurshid titled **“FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF SEX TOYS”** and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Educational Sciences

Examining Committee	Name-Surname	Signature
Head of the Committee:	Asst Prof Dr. Tijen Zeybek	
Committee Member:	Dr. Laith Tashtoush	
Supervisor:	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ertugan	


...../2023.
Dr. Şerife EYÜPOĞLU
Head of Department

Approved by the Institute of Graduate Studies


...../2023.
Prof. Dr. Kemal Hüsnü Can Başer
Head of the Institute

Declaration

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

KHALID KHURSHID

25.10.2023

Day/Month/Year

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Assoc. Professor Dr. Ahmet Ertugan, whose supervision and expertise was invaluable in completing this research topic and methodology, In particular, this thesis would have not been possible without him. Furthermore, I would like to pay my gratitude to all my lecturers from the Department of Business Administration in the Near East University as well as all the people who participated and helped me expand my abilities and knowledge directly and indirectly.

Khalid Khurshid

Abstract**FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF
SEX TOYS****Khalid Khurshid****M.Sc., Department of Business Administration****August, 2023, 119 pages**

Discussion on intimate relationships including sex and sex toys has been considered a taboo. With the liberalization of western societies, peoples' views have started to change and sex and related topics are being discussed more openly. Sex toys business is expanding rapidly but in many parts of the world, it is still a difficult topic to talk about and there is still stigma attached to it. So, not much research has been done on this topic.

The purpose of this study was to understand if factors like privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics play any part in their intentions while purchasing sex toys. There is an increase in sex toys usage and there are certain factors that seem to influence people's decision to purchase these toys. This study was done from the perspective of consumers.

This quantitative study was conducted to test four hypotheses with a sample size of 200 participants. A questionnaire with a five likert scales was used to gather the data and analysed. This study revealed that the factors like privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics influenced the participants' intention to purchase or otherwise of the sex toys. It was recommended to enhance and revalidate the results of this study with a bigger geographical pool of participants to collect the views of wider population.

Key words: purchase Intentions, sex toys, privacy, embarrassment, location

Özet

Tüketicilerin Seks Oyuncaklarını Satın Alma Niyetlerini Etkileyen Faktörler

Khalid Khurshid

Yüksek Lisans, İşletme Bölümü

Agustos, 2023, 119 sayfalar

Seks ve seks oyuncakları da dahil olmak üzere yakın ilişkilere ilişkin tartışmaların tabu olduğu düşünülüyor. Batı toplumlarının liberalleşmesiyle birlikte insanların görüşleri değişmeye başlamış, cinsiyet ve bağlantılı konular daha açık bir şekilde tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. Seks oyuncakları işi hızla büyüyor ancak dünyanın birçok yerinde bu konu hâlâ konuşulması zor bir konu ve bu konuda hâlâ damgalanma var. Dolayısıyla bu konu üzerinde pek fazla araştırma yapılmamıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, seks oyuncakları satın alırken mahremiyet, konum, utanç ve etik gibi faktörlerin niyetlerinde herhangi bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını anlamaktır. Seks oyuncakları kullanımında bir artış var ve insanların bu oyuncakları satın alma kararını etkileyen bazı faktörler var. Bu çalışma tüketicilerin bakış açısıyla yapılmıştır.

Bu niceliksel çalışma, 200 katılımcıdan oluşan bir örneklem büyüklüğü ile dört hipotezi test etmek için yapılmıştır. Verileri toplamak ve analiz etmek için beşli likert ölçekli bir anket kullanıldı. Bu çalışma, mahremiyet, konum, utanç ve etik gibi faktörlerin katılımcıların seks oyuncaklarını satın alma veya almama niyetlerini etkilediğini ortaya çıkardı. Daha geniş bir kitlenin görüşlerini toplamak için bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının daha büyük bir coğrafi katılımcı havuzuyla geliştirilmesi ve yeniden doğrulanması önerildi.

Anahtar kelimeler: Satın alma Niyeti, seks oyuncakları, mahremiyet, utanç, konum

Table of Contents

Approval.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Öz.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
List of Abbreviations.....	xi

CHAPTER I

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Need fort This Study.....	3
Objectives of This Study.....	4
Research Gap.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Study Model.....	6
The study's theoretical framework.....	7
Factors Influencing Intentions to Purchase Sex Toys.....	8
Hypothesis Development.....	12
Importance of Study.....	12
Limitations.....	13
Chapter Summaries.....	13
Conclusion.....	14

CHAPTER II

Literature Review.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Definitions and Historical Context.....	15
Lack of Research on Sex Toys.....	16
Previous research on sex toys.....	16

Sex Toys Recontextualised	19
Retail Environment and Sex Toys.....	20
Taboo Products and Sex Toys.....	23
Sex Toys, More Acceptable	24
Covid 19, A Cause of Increase in Sex Toys Usage.....	25
Concept of Cultural and Demographic Characteristics	26
Difference in Cultural and Demographic Charateristics	28
Consumer Behavior.....	29
Global and Particular Consumer Culture	29
Consumer Decision Making Model	34
Predicting Consumers Behavioral Intentions: Planned Behaviour Theory.....	41
Research Strategy.....	45
Conclusion	45

CHAPTER III

Methodology	46
Introduction	46
Research Approach	46
Research Design.....	47
Goodness of Data	47
Method	48
Ethics.....	51
Conclusion	51

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion	52
Introduction	52
Realization Rate	52
Descriptives Statistics	52
Data Analysis	61
Conclusion	75

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION.....	76
-----------------	----

Introduction	76
Main Points Reviewed from Relted Literature.....	76
Main Findings	77
Research Hypothesis	78
Discussion	78
Conclusion	85

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion and Recommendations	86
Conclusions	86
Theoretical Implications.....	87
Practical and Business Implications.....	89
Limitations	92
Recommendations for Future Studies	93
Conclusion	94
REFERENCE.....	95
APPENDICES	98

List of Tables

Table 1. Examples of taboo products	23
Table 2. Realization Rate	52
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics	54
Table 4. Gender Frequency	55
Table 5. Relationship Status Frequency	57
Table 6. Age Group Frequency	58
Table 7. Sexual Orientation Frequency.....	56
Table 8. Education Background	58
Table 9. Religious Background.....	61
Table 10. Where are you from	62
Table 11. Privacy Concerns Descriptives	65
Table 12. Privacy Concerns Correlations	65
Table 13. Privacy Concerns Model Summary	66
Table 14. Privacy Concerns Coefficients	66
Table 15. Privacy Concerns Residual Statistics	67
Table 16. Location Descriptive Statistics	68
Table 17. Location Correlations	69
Table 18. Location Model Summary	69
Table 19. Location Coefficients	70
Table 20. Location Residuals Statistics	70
Table 21. Embarrassment Descriptive Statistics	72
Table 22. Embarrassment Correlations	72
Table 23. Embarrassment Model Summary	73
Table 24. Embarrassment Coefficients	73
Table 25. Embarrassment Residuals Statistics	74
Table 26. Ethics Descriptive Statistics	76
Table 27. Ethics Correlations	76
Table 28. Ethics Model Summary	77
Table 29. Ethics Coefficients	77
Table 30. Ethics Residuals Statistics	78

List of Figure

Figure 1. The Study Model.	7
Figure 2. Maslow’s Hierarchy or Pyramid of Humen Needs.....	33
Figure 3. Continuum behaviour of buying	36
Figure 4. Different Stages in the Consumer Decision Making.	38
Figure 5. The Theory of Planned Behaviour	45
Figure 6. Gender Frequency shown in Bar Charts	57
Figure 7. Relationship Status shown in Bar Charts	58
Figure 8. Age Group shown in Bar Charts	59
Figure 9. Sexual Orientation shown in Bar Charts.....	60
Figure 10. Education Background shown in Bar Charts.....	61
Figure 11. Religious Background shown in Bar Charts	62
Figure 12. Where are you from shown in Bar Charts	63
Figure 13. Privacy Concerns	64
Figure 14. Location	68
Figure 15. Embarrassment	71
Figure 16. Ethics	75

List of Abbreviations

TPB: Theory of Planned Behaviour

TRNC: Turkish Republic of North Cyprus

CHAPTER I

1.1 Introduction

The topic of research is introduced in this chapter along with the background that created the inspiration to do this study. The knowledge gap within related background information was also identified in this chapter after which the problem statement is formed and the study focuses on that problem statement. The conceptual model of the study is presented afterwards which shows the independent and dependent variables. This study like any other research studies also has some significance along with its limitations which are explained in later parts along with the chapter summaries at the end of the chapter.

1.2 Background

The expansion of the worldwide sex toy business in recent years served as the study's impetus (statisticbrain.com). About half of American adults aged 18 to 60 have used a vibrator during sexual activity, according to studies by Herbenick et al. (2009) and Reece et al. (2009). Our basic desire for sex as well as more complicated wants for love, closeness, and self-actualization are all appealed to by sex toys (Maslow 1979). Sex toys used to be hard to get since they weren't widely distributed and were considered forbidden. When buying sex gadgets from sketchy sex stores, people felt embarrassed and spoke of them with sniggers and contempt (Kent & Brown 2006; Kent 2005). In many cases, low-quality materials were used to make the toys, which were then packaged with scantily dressed ladies and sold to male customers (Eaglin & Bardzell 2011). Sex toys have lost some of their taboo status during the last several decades. Because of the more accepting attitudes towards sexuality, they are more generally accepted by the general population (Helén & Yesilova 2003; Kontula 2008, 81; Herbenick et al. 2011; Loe 1999). The hurdles to purchasing sex toys have been lessened by their increased acceptance and simpler availability. Sex toys have evolved from a speciality item to a widely used consumer offering. Today, sex toys are easily accessible in a variety of locations, including pharmacies, grocery shops, department stores, and online retailers like Amazon.

Sex toys are now widely available thanks to a convergence of cultural, social, and technical advancements. In two different ways, technical improvements have led to the rise in demand for sex toys. The anonymity of internet buying eliminates the shame of visiting a conventional brick and mortar sex shop (Talvio 2011). Second,

new and enhanced sex toys that mix design and high-quality have been created as a result of product improvements (Attwood 2005; Eaglin & Bardzell 2011).

The mainstreaming of the sex toy industry is part of a larger framework of cultural and social change in Western culture. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movements today, the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, and the sexual revolution of the 1960s have all influenced the development of more liberal attitudes towards sex (Helén & Yesilova 2003; Kontula 2008; Herbenick et al. 2011; Loe 1999). The market for sex toys has benefited from increasingly accepting attitudes towards people's sexuality. Women are a profitable market for sex toys since attitudes towards female sexuality have shifted to become more liberal (Kontula 2008). By selling sex devices to female consumers and making claims about their sexual health and fashion, the sex toy business has developed (Attwood 2005; Kent & Brown 2006; Eaglin & Bardzell 2011). Sex toys have been modernised and made more approachable to women by television shows like *Sex and the City* and magazines like *Cosmopolitan*.

Sex toys may be discussed in the public media without causing a moral uproar because to the more accepting attitudes towards sexuality. In today's sexualized culture, the open presentation of sexual content in the mainstream media is regarded as normal (Attwood 2009; McNair 2002). Sex toys are being promoted to us as things with claims of style and trend, presented to us by the media, and sold to us as a matter of lifestyle (Attwood 2009; McNair 2002). In porno-chic, non-pornographic art, clothing, and advertising are combined with pornographic aspects (McNair 2002). Examples of this phenomena include the fashion designer Alexander McQueen, the musician Katy Perry, and the artist Jeff Koons. Through commercialization, porno-chic has made sexual consumerism accessible to a wide audience (McNair 2002). For instance, bed linens and coffee packets both depict the homoerotic artwork of Tom of Finland. The business for sex toys is likewise shifting towards licencing. This presents more opportunity for the sector to expand. For Valentine's Day 2017, Burger King Israel introduced an adult meal that included with a sex toy. The pornographic novel "50 Shades of Grey" has received the most favourable licencing to date. The sex toys based on the plot and key characters of the novel were offered at big-box stores like Target (Langsworthy 2015).

As the lines separating the private and public domains of existence are blurring, intimate concerns have become public (Plummer 2003; Kontula 2008). People are not ashamed to discuss their sexual preferences in depth. In reality, the culture at large

promotes sexual exhibitionism and sexualized appearance. Social media is used to exchange intimate confessions and images, and reality TV with overtly sexual content, like *Temptation Island*, is widely consumed. (McNair 2002; Attwood 2009) private citizenship and striptease culture are terms used to describe the phenomena whereby young people, in particular, live their private lives through media (Plummer 2003, 21). The stigma associated with sex toys has been reduced because to a climate that encourages open communication about sexuality. It has created new possibilities for the branding and marketing of sex toy companies' goods.

1.3 Need for This study.

For last few decades, the business world has become more and more global. Countries as well as companies are exchanging internationally a lot. They take many ideas from the type of products and services are working in their neighbouring countries or companies and then they are competing with each other. This phenomenon as we call it “Globalisation”, is resulting in expansion of companies and businesses to other different countries. The main purpose behind this is to grow the business and eventually make more profit for the share holders.

According to Theodore Levitt, this is resulting in this world turning into a common global marketplace where consumers have the same or similar basic needs, desires, wants as well as taste irrespect to their place of stay. (Levitt, 1983). This description leads directly to what is called the concept of Americanization. The term Americanization is normally in use by the researchers to describe the influence created by the United States of America on the culture of different global countries around the world. It points to the globalization of different and big American businesses and companies, their culture, their lifestyle as well as their technology. On the other hand, this point of view can not be taken as true on its face value because not everyone agreed on Levitt’s method of thinking. Many international companies and busiensses develop and then sell their products and services in different countries because of the adaptation of their advertising campaigns while keeping a closer eye on the local cultures, languages, local lifestyles as well as local values of the countries and communities the companies and businesses are targeting. (Belch & Belch, 2001)

Customers and consumers diversification of different cultures seem to have a very significant and important impact on product and services advertisement and marketing of the businesses. Culture has a big influence on many aspects of consumers

personal and professional lives. Because of all these differences, the consumers do not see the services and products these companies and businesses are offering through the same lense. This affects the marketing that is being used in different countries and societies and while doing so, companies take into account the cultural aspects of the local communities they are targeting. So, the advertisement and marketing take a much bigger role in companies international ventures. The companies have to understand and learn the ways of life, culture and social norms of different countries. They have to understand that consumer behaviour in one country might be totally different from one country to a different country. Keeping this in mind, the companies use different marketing techniques in different palces which are more aligned with the local values. This becomes even more important when the products or services in question are considered a taboo in these societies like the focus of this study which are sex toys.

1.4 Objectives of This Study

Our objective in this study was to try to understand and explain the effect and influence of people's privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics on their intentions to purchase sex toys so that marketing advertisement can be done affectively and how the consumer behavior might change depending on their background information. The focus of this study is on consumer's point of view instead of the companies.

The puroose of this study is to see if people's privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics affect their intentions to purchase sex toys. By doing so would enable businesses to understand the consumer thinkinking behind their decisions to either purchase or otherwise of sex toys and related products.

This study would focus initially on important theories explaining cultures, their consumer behaviour and marketing at a national as well as an international stage. Then it would take into account the responses given as part of a survey questionnaire used in this study.

1.5 Research gap

In recent years, the market for sex toys has expanded consistently. The current worldwide sex toy market is estimated to be worth about 15 billion USD a year (statisticbrain.com). When considering the magnitude of the industry, the consumer behaviour surrounding sex toys has gotten surprisingly little attention in academic studies. The absence of study might be explained by the possibility that both customers

and researchers in the past saw the subject as taboo. The TPB framework, which is founded on the idea that consumer behaviour may be anticipated from intentions towards the behaviour (Ajzen 1991), is used in this thesis to evaluate purchase intentions towards sex toys.

There hasn't been any prior business studies on sex toys. The majority of articles are published in other fields, such as gender studies and health science (Loe 2010, Shick 2013, Herbenick 2009). Chapter 2 provides a thorough assessment of prior studies. More study on sex toys in the context of marketing is required because little is known about the consumers for these goods. From a marketing standpoint, comprehension of consumer behaviour is crucial. The TPB provides extensive information on consumer motivation for buying sex toys when used to study purchase intentions. The majority of current research (Kent & Brown 2006; Liebermann 2016) focuses on historical descriptions of the development of the adult shopping business.

The primary goal of this study is to present up-to-date data on purchasing intentions and the variables influencing them. Finding correct information regarding consumer views is crucial since discussions about sex toys sometimes revolve around outdated ideas and prejudices. The majority of research on the usage of sex toys have had a female perspective, omitting other demographics who use and purchase sex toys (Schmidt & Malina 1997, Attwood 2005, Walther & Schouten 2016). This research aims to give information on various sex toy customer groups rather than overemphasise the female perspective.

From a marketing standpoint, the majority of studies on sex toys are qualitative (Kent & Brown 2006; Liebermann 2016). There are clearly not enough quantitative research. Although both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used in this study, the focus is on giving data regarding the purchase of sex toys. Condom usage has already been predicted using TPB (Sheeran & Taylor 1999). This study attempts to offer more proof that the TPB is a reliable tool for assessing sex-related behaviour.

1.6 Statement of Problem

This objective of this study was to look into the factors which might or otherwise affect the purchasing of sex toys in people with different cultural and social backgrounds. The main question was, "What factors influence consumers intentions to purchase sex toys?". This study tries to understand if people's location, privacy, embarrassment and ethics affects the way people think of purchasing the sex toys.

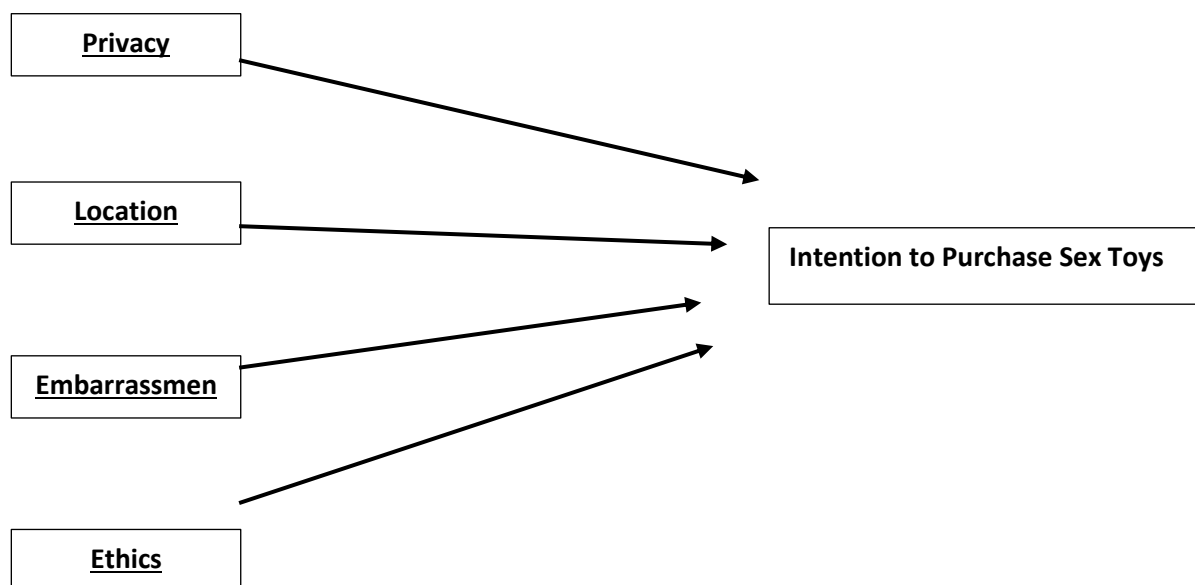
1.7 Study Model

The main objective of this study was to understand if consumers from different cultural backgrounds with different demographic characteristics would have a different attitude towards their intentions to purchase sex toys. In doing so, factors such as privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics were taken into account. The purpose was to find out how they perceive it, if consumers understand with these facts and then agree with the concept of sex toys purchase and need for that usage. There were some studies done prior to this but the main focus of those studies have been on the policies of the companies and their perspective in this regard. But consumers' point of view and attitude have not been taken into account previously. That's why this study's focus was from a consumer perspective. It would be really interesting and relevant to understand how their factors affect their point of view. So the companies would take into account with great care at these kinds of information. It might help businesses understand which aspects of consumers' demographics were more important in their attitude towards their intentions to purchase the sex toys in their own personal life or in their society in general,

In the coming parts that would follow, theoretical aspects which are mentioned as follows would be helpful to understand the study's research questions, build accordingly a consumer survey: Elements of cultural and demographic aspects: It could be important to see if factors like privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics have any influence on the consumers intention to purchase sex toys. By enquiring to consumers who come from different cultures and countries what they think about the usage of sex toys, it is hoped that it would be in a position to understand to see there was some strong differences that would come up when comparing responses of the people from different parts of the world and people in the northern part of Cyprus because this would help to do the evaluation at the level of a typical consumer demographics against the appearance of the one which is unified.

"Figure 1" shows the conceptual model of this study has been based on. It shows four independent variables along with one dependent variable.

Figure 1: The Study Model



From the background information and the literature review carried out previously in the study report suggested consumers intentions to purchase sex toys was not clear as this is being very intimate and private aspect of people's lives. There seemed to be a relationship between consumers location, privacy, embarrassment and etyhics when considering to purchase sex toys for sexual pleasure.

1.8 The study's theoretical framework

In order to estimate demand and predict customer behaviour, purchasing intentions are crucial (Armitage & Conner 2001, Sheeran 2002, Godin & Kok 1996). Although intentions may not always translate into behaviour, Sheeran (2002) claims that they are a decent predictor of behaviour. Purchase intentions are characterised as a person's overarching driving force to make a purchase (Ajzen 1991, 181). Intention is defined as: "...commitment, plan, or decision to carry out an action or achieve a goal" by Eagly & Chaiken (1993, 168).

The drive hypothesis, which identified sex as one of the fundamental impulses underlying human behaviour (Freud 1920; Hull 1943, 59–60), provides the first explanation for motivation. Maslow said that three essential needs were sex, food, and rest (Maslow 1970, 35–36). The sex drive is one of the primary motivational factors for people, according to all of these theories (Baumeister et al. 2001, 263). The flaw in drive theories is that they make the assumption that people behave impulsively to

meet their physiological requirements. Normal adults' behaviour is not entirely driven by instincts; rather, it is self-directed and is pushed by desired results rather than drives (Deci & Ryan 1985, 34). Before making a choice to acquire anything, it helps to be able to see and predict the results (Deci & Ryan 1985, Shapiro 1981).

The theory of reasoned action (hence abbreviated as TRA) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) are cognitive theories that attempt to explain human behaviour by assuming that intentions for a behaviour may be used to anticipate that behaviour. The TRA makes the assumption that attitude and subjective norm determine intention. According to the TPB, perception of behavioural control, subjective norm, and attitude towards behaviour are the three main factors that determine intention (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005, 194). Figure 3 depicts the TPB and its parts.

1.9 Factors Influencing Intentions to Purchase Sex Toys

The action, target, context, and time components of the TPB's behaviour must be specified (Ajzen & Fishbein 1977, 913). With the help of the underlying behavioural beliefs, attitudes may be assessed in the TPB. Multiplying behavioural beliefs with outcome assessments results in the attitude towards a behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, 223). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), we develop positive attitudes towards behaviours that lead to desired results and negative attitudes towards behaviours that lead to avoided consequences. By holding the following opinion, buying sex toys can be linked to an improvement in one's sex life: I think buying sex toys will liven up my sex life. How favourably or negatively one assesses outcomes, or how desirable each result or consequence is, is known as an outcome evaluation (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005, 193). For instance: It would be beneficial if my sexual life were spiced up. The more optimistic one is, the more they are able to tune out unfavourable events and obtain positively valued outcomes (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005, 193).

Through social norms, which are the benchmarks for ideal behaviour within a culture, our civilization establishes what is desirable and what is undesirable (Deutsch & Gerard 1955). According to Talvio (2011), the shame is more potent when someone believes they have violated a social standard or that others don't approve of their behaviour. When dealing with forbidden items or behaviours, subjective norm is crucial (Sabri 2012, 232). When purchasing taboo items, subjective norm might

negatively influence purchase intentions, claims Sabri (2012, 227). The subjective norm gauges whether the consumer's social referents approve or disapprove of their behaviour (Ajzen & Madden 1986, 454). The greater a person's intention to engage in a behaviour should be, the more favourable the subjective standard is with regard to that behaviour. (Ajzen 1991, 188.)

The social effect of consumers' referents, such friends and family, is known as normative belief. A typical notion regarding the impact of friends might be: I consider my friends' opinions while choosing sex toys. How much importance the individual accords to the viewpoint of the group or individual in issue determines their incentive to comply. As an illustration, I value my friend's viewpoint. (Ajzen 1991.) An individual's intention to engage in the behaviour should be stronger the more the normative referents approve of it.

The TPB takes into account volitional control as a distinct variable called perceived behavioural control, which represents one's impression of how simple or difficult it is to conduct the behaviour. The TRA presupposes that behaviour is within a person's volitional control. Perceived behavioural control has enhanced the prediction of intention from the TRA (Godin & Kok, 1996) and helped explain for variance (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Ajzen, 2011). Time, money, and skills are among the resources that are needed for most behaviours (Ajzen & Madden 1986, 455). Both internal and external resources, such as time and opportunity, can be seen as resources (Ajzen & Madden 1986, 456). In addition to motivation, behaviour also depends on having sufficient control over one's actions (Ajzen & Madden 1986, 458). Only to the extent that behaviour control permits, motivation affects behaviour (Ajzen 1991, 183). An individual's intention to engage in the behaviour should be stronger the stronger the perceived behavioural control is (Ajzen 1991, 188).

Past interactions with behaviour may have an impact on control beliefs. Anyone who has previously purchased sex items from a website may tell you whether or not anonymous purchases are possible. Secondhand knowledge of the behaviour may also have an impact on control beliefs. It might be simpler to purchase sex toys if a buddy gives you recommendations about what to buy. The person's ability to manage their behaviour is revealed by past behaviour. Therefore, it is thought that the perceived behavioural control reflects the impact of prior behaviour in the TPB (Ajzen 1991, 188, 204). The initial model was enhanced by the incorporation of prior behaviour as a distinct component (Sheeran & Taylor 1999, Conner & Armitage 1998).

According to a number of research (Bentler & Speckart 1979, Bagozzi & Kimmel 1995, Kor & Mullan 2011, Kidwell & Jewell 2008, Smith 2008), previous behaviour has a direct impact on intentions.

1.9.1 Privacy

The concept of privacy is a fundamental human right that has been recognized and protected by various international laws and conventions. Individuals have the right to control their personal information and to make decisions about who has access to it. In the context of sex toy purchases, privacy concerns can be a significant factor that affects consumers' decision-making. The theory of privacy management suggests that individuals use various strategies to manage their privacy, including limiting the amount of information they disclose and controlling the flow of information to others. Consumers who prioritize their privacy may use similar strategies when purchasing sex toys, such as choosing to buy from discreet online retailers or using anonymous payment methods.

H1: Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

1.9.2 Location

Location is another important factor that can affect consumer behaviour. The theory of cultural dimensions suggests that different cultures have varying attitudes towards sexuality and sexual products. In cultures that are more conservative or stigmatize discussions of sex, consumers may be less likely to purchase sex toys openly. This can lead to increased feelings of embarrassment and discomfort. In contrast, consumers living in more liberal communities may be more open to discussing and purchasing sex toys, leading to increased demand.

H2: Location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

1.9.3vEmbarrassment

Embarrassment is a complex emotion that can be influenced by a range of factors, including social norms, self-esteem, and personal beliefs. The theory of social identity suggests that individuals derive their self-concept from the social groups they belong to. In the context of sex toy purchases, consumers may feel embarrassed

because of societal expectations or personal beliefs about sexuality. Retailers who acknowledge and address these concerns, such as by offering discreet packaging or providing education about sexual health, may be more successful in attracting and retaining customers.

H3: Embarrassment felt by consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

1.9.4 Ethics

Ethical considerations can impact consumers' purchasing behaviour. The theory of ethical consumerism suggests that consumers may choose to buy products that align with their personal values and beliefs. This can include considerations about the environmental impact of production, fair labour practices, and animal welfare. Consumers who prioritize these values may be more likely to research sex toy manufacturers and choose retailers who prioritize ethical manufacturing practices.

H4: Ethical concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Overall, these theoretical frameworks can help us understand how privacy, location, embarrassment, and ethics may impact consumers' purchase of sex toys. By understanding these factors, retailers can develop strategies that cater to consumers' needs and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all customers. The following were the Research Hypotheses which were derived from the study model.

1.10 Hypotheses Development

H1: Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

H2: Location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

H3: Embarrassment felt by consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

H4: Ethical concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

1.11 Importance of Study

There is not great deal of research that has been done on this very intimate and private aspect of people's life. Some research that has been carried out seem to be related to the companies and businesses own perspectives, communication and advertising and did not take into account the nature of people's socioeconomic background. This study tried to take into account the customer and consumers and tried to see if there was any relationship.

Consumer behaviour can be affected by many different factors, for example, someone's neighbours consumption could have an effect on a consumer's choices. But speaking in broad terms, a consumer's cultural and demographic characteristics are the factors which have more influence on consumer behaviour while they are making their purchasing decisions because based on these traits, businesses could modify their advertising campaigns accordingly in order to get their marketing message across. It is hard to understand consumer choices without taking into account consumers cultural and demographic traits and characteristics. Culture acts like a prism through which customers see the products and then they try to understand their own as well as others consumer behaviour around them (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010).

There were some good pioneers of the relationship that exist between consumer behaviour and cultural background with different demographic characteristics. Some of them were Mary Douglas and the economist Baron Isherwood. They suggested that products were mostly used as social markers. They said that consumers normally act through different types of consumptions habits and also rituals. Within each of these cultures, it was very important to understand these habits and rituals which are present in different cultures having different demographic characteristics. Because consumers' overall priorities, according to these researchers, were determined as the consumers would attach these ritual etc to different activities and products. Hence, this process would also determine either the success or failure of the products and services supplied by businesses in that culture.

A culture is composed of a number of different aspects of peoples' lives. In order to understand how cultural values and demographic characteristics can have impact on consumer behavior can also be described as rules and regulations, any existing myths as well as any rituals, or it could be language as well as peoples' gender, education, sexual orientation, marital status, religious background and their age. Norms as well as rules are considered the basic principles of a certain culture because

they could determine what some see as classed as right and wrong, acceptable to the society or it could be unacceptable for the people and they normally are different from one society to another society. These norms as well as rules might consist of customs which are actually a norm but these are passed on from the previous generations and could have controls on people's underlying behavior. It could also be some daily act of people's habits but with some strong and moral connotation. This could involve anti-taboos or sometime a kind of forbidden behaviour. If these morals are violated in a society, it could result in a sense of shame being felt by these people performing them from the other members of this same society. It could also be in the form of conventions. These could be strongly related to a culture's consumer behavior.

1.12 Limitations

Sex is very personal and private matter of people's lives and people normally do not like to discuss aspects of their sex life with anyone apart from very close people around them. So, asking about these aspects was always going to be little difficult and even if people do express their sexual preferences, they could still hide their true feeling and thoughts because of potential embarrassment.

1.13 Chapter Summeries

The summeries of the rest of the chapters in the study are explained below.

1.13.1 Chapter Two

Past literature relevant to this study is reviewed in this chapter to take into account any similar study to the one in this paper.

1.13.2 Chapter Three

Conceptual model of this study is developed in this chapter. At the same time, research hypothesis is formulated and method to investigate is described also here. The conceptual model's independent along with dependent variables involved in the study model are explained and determination of their relationship.

1.13.3 Chapter Four

The methodology used in this study and the plan to investigate is discussed in this chapter.

1.13.4 Chapter Five

The data collected in the study is discussed and any findings analysed. The realization rate of the data collected, correctness of the data, participants' demographics and their responses are discussed. Then all the analysis is done of the data.

1.13.5 Chapter Six

In this chapter, final discussions related to the study are discussed. It begins with the discussions of the research questions which were presented in earlier chapters. These questions were explained again and then revisited. It was discussed if the objectives and aims of this study were met and were able to provide answers to the research question of the study. Afterwards limitations of the study and recommendations for related future studies were detailed.

1.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research topic was introduced along with related background which inspired to do this research study. The knowledge gap was identified and the problem statement was formulated. Based on that, the thesis of this study was discussed and a conceptual model was drawn which described the independent and dependent variables. Then the research hypotheses were drawn from this conceptual model. Finally, chapter summaries of the remaining chapters were detailed.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, reviews of previous literature on this subject which addressed these similar aspects of peoples' sex lives where by peoples' sexual preferences were discussed in terms of their willingness to use or otherwise of the sex toys in society in general and their personal lives in particular.

2.2 Definitions and Historical Context

Sex can be described as “leisure in a popular form that helps to fulfill multiple of our needs. It also benefits both physical as well as psychological wellness” (Lehmiller, 2021). Sex toys can be defined as these are kind of material objects which are used by consumers to generate as well as enhance their intimate arousal during sex. This could also be to enhance pleasure in solo sex as well as during partnered sex (Döring & Pöschl, 2018). Depending on the lifestyle and identities, these can be in different forms, for example, strap-on dildos are common in queer communities whereas heterosexual interactions involve mostly vibrators, cock rings and fetish accessories. The nature and kind of these products keep getting large with time with new or improved ones coming to the market very often.

But this phenomenon of using sex toys is not just linked to our modern society. Humans have Phallus-shaped artefacts have been found in archaeological excavations which were seemingly used for sexual stimulation dating back 30,000 years. Drawings and paintings from early times through Middle Ages show the presence of use of sex toys in different cultures. (Lieberman, 2017a) This illustrates the human need to enhance peoples' sex life from very early history of human kind.

In marketing terms, buying sex toys is classed as sexuality-related or erotic consumption. (Walther & Schouten, 2016) and also called sexually related consumer behavior (Gould, 1992)

Gould (1995) explains that any consumption that is related to sex involves the sex act on its own and also any objects or toys that could be used during that act. for instance, sex toys as an example (Walther and Schouten, 2016, Wilner and Huff, 2017). Prostitution has also been classified in similar categories by some researchers. (Hirschman, 1991, Belk, Ostergaard and Groves, 1998) and also pornography.

2.3 Lack of Research in Sex Toys

Gould (1995) argues that consumer behavior regarding buying sex toys has not been studied in detail in the past. The apparent reason seems to be the embarrassment people feel while discussing about the usage of sex toys and fear of attracting negative and harmful attention from others (Robbins & Parlavecchio 2006, Gilbert 1997, Sznycer 2016). Sex and any related activity are very private and intimate matters of people's personal lives and talking about them, discussing it with other than their immediate partners or family are not a norm for most people. It could be said that it is one of the taboos of the society which is not talked about in detail more often. On the other hand, it could be argued that the idea of violating taboos may excite some consumers (Sabri, 2012), and can be used actually to evoke the interest of consumers (Bataille, 1962). There are always groups of some people who try to go against the social norms and like to break these kinds of taboos.

Many articles were read to find out what research so far has been done on sex toys usage. The focus of some of these articles appear to be from feminism point of view and how sex toys usage is increasing along with the feminism concept and how sex toys have empowered women in taking their pleasure in their own hands. Other articles' focus is on different types of sex toys which are available in the market. Morality of sex toys usage has been discussed in some articles. (Molotch, England, 2018)

2.4 Previous research on sex toys

There is relatively little marketing-related research on sex toys. The focus of most of the earlier business study on sex toys has been on detailing the evolution of the adult retailing sector over the years. The role of women as sex toy customers and the contrast between conventional sex stores and new erotic boutiques are at the centre of these research. An summary of prior research on sex toy customer behaviour is provided in Table 1. In their examination from the 1960s to the start of the new century, Kent and Brown (2006) detailed how sex shops changed from seedy bookshops geared towards males to chic establishments that catered to female customers. The distinctions between classic sex parlours and modern erotic boutiques in England and Wales were examined by Martin and Crewe (2016). The two have different design, marketing, and product choices, according to the authors (Table 1). Maines (1989) and Liebermann (2016) concentrated on explaining the vibrator's commercial evolution.

Women's use of sex toys is the subject of several studies. An exploratory case study regarding the service encounters at the UK-based sex store Sh! was undertaken by Schmidt and Malina (1997). In sex parlours geared towards women, they investigated hedonistic consumption (Table 1). Walther and Schouten (2016) looked at Brazilian women's erotica consumption (Table 1). Websites that offered female sex items were investigated by Attwood (2005) (Table 1). These websites, according to Attwood (2005), sold sex toys to women as fashion and design objects, making them more and more a matter of personal preference. Smith (2007) looked at the development of sex toy design and sex retailing in the UK as a way for women to express their preferences and way of life.

The introduction of ecommerce has a significant influence on the sex toy business, yet few scholars have looked at this topic. Daneback et al. (2011) looked at the characteristics of internet users who buy sex-related products (Table 1). They discovered that consumers bought sexual goods online for a variety of reasons, including convenience, accessibility, anonymity, low pricing, and the desire to avoid visiting physical sex stores (Daneback et al. 2011). Sex toys were once thought to be related with watching porn. Sex toys have lost ground to pornography as a study topic due to the volume of studies undertaken on it (Attwood 2005; Paasonen et al. 2015). Numerous studies classify sex toys and pornography as belonging to the same category (Daneback et al. 2011). The 2000s saw a significant amount of sex toys research undertaken.

There is lack of proper research on this topic because of the reasons explained earlier. When people purchase sex toys, it is most of the times a sensitive topic for their personal life, hence in order to understand the bigger picture involved in this and surrounding their sexual behaviour would probably require different kind of methodological approach (Lee, 1993, Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006). In particular, one could use a mixed-method approach where by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (Carins, Rundle-Thiele, & Fidock, 2016, Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, Eberhart & Naderer, 2017). This way, it would enable the exploration of the different factors which would influence the consumer behaviour while buying these kinds of products. It would also help to increase the understanding the use of sex toys and their interconnection within a context involving culture (Carins, 2016).

In the research study 'From filthy to healthy and beyond: finding the boundaries of taboo destruction in sex toy buying' (Hurmerinta, Sandberg & Jarvinen, 2018), researchers researched through a consumer survey using the familiar theory of consumers' planned behaviour (Ryan & Bonfield, 1975, Ajzen, 2008) using their conceptual framework (cf. Richard & Meuli, 2013; Tonglet, 2002).

In that study, researchers studied how people's subjective norms, attitudes as well as their perceived behaviour control affected their buying intentions of the sex toys. Attitudes was concerned to a person's belief while thinking about the resulting of purchasing the sex toys. In this way, if an individual has a belief that purchase of sex toys might cause an increase or decrease in his/her own or their partners' sexual satisfaction, the attitudes could be more-positive or negative which would depend on the outcome of the experience (Reece, 2009, Herbenick, 2009). Also, subjective norms are considered to be a person's own way of thoughts of how others might or otherwise react when that person would purchase the sex toys. Perceived behaviour control is related to a person's perception of how much more likely it was for him or her to really purchase the sex toys.

The emphasis on social interpretation of sex toys which is an intimate consumption choice, reflects the traditional status of women consumers in the society. There are several studies which have emphasized on how participants would have negotiated their identities and transcended prevalent taboos and taboo related products and stigmas attached to them to adopt products (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Piha, 2018, Wilner & Huff, 2016), this study contributes to the existing body of literature by exploring that there could be social and demographics characteristics which could affect these consumer choices. Broussard and Harton (2017) described that negative social perceptions in any society persist about, for example, tattooed individuals. Muhamed and Mizerski (2013) also found similar results while trying to understand the consumption of taboo products in the context of religious cultures. This study improves existent literature by focusing on taboo persons contextualized in a social structure with different demographics characteristics and also provides an explanation of how gendered habitus could be some of the reasons behind any products consumed with different demographic backgrounds.

2.5 Sex Toys Recontextualised

A sex toy is defined as "An object or device used for sexual stimulation or to enhance sexual pleasure" by Oxford Dictionary. People of various ages can use sex toys for a variety of purposes, either by themselves or with a partner. Previous studies have used the phrases adult novelty (Bardzell & Bardzell 2011), sex toy and related products (Schmidt & Malina 1997), sex products (Martin & Crewe 2016), sexual merchandise (Daneback, 2011), and sex toys (Schmidt & Malina 1997). In this study, the following items were classified as sex toys: vibrators, lubricants, dildos, anal sex toys, penis rings, rubber vaginas, erotic play props, and BDSM equipment. The vibrator is currently the most popular sex toy (Chiang 2011, Daneback 2011, Millward 2014). It was the first modern-era commercial sex toy. Vibrators were first used as a medical treatment for female hysteria in the eighteenth century (Maines 1999). They were promoted as consumer electrics and put on display in storefronts at the start of the 20th century. They were promoted with kitchen equipment in the popular women's magazines. Vibrating devices were used for both overtly non-sexual and covertly sexual purposes. The vibrator was frequently referred to as a medicinal tool for treating headaches and aching muscles. (Liebermann 2016) Even when the applications were overtly sexual, as in a Hygieny Vibratory Co. commercial from 1903 that promoted a Sexual Vibrator for both men and women, the media for the advertisement was respectable, in this case the Health magazine (Liebermann 2016).

Vibrators were briefly openly advertised and sold, but this only lasted until the 1920s, when they began to appear in pornography and lost their respectable reputation (Maines, 1999). The sexual revolution began in the 1960s, but sex toys were still uncommon. The Hitachi massage wand was one of the most well-liked toys that was promoted for non-sexual purposes (Maines 1999). Sex toys didn't fully return until the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. Other sex goods were more acceptable and marketable as a result of widespread condom marketing efforts that emphasised the use of condoms as a pleasure device rather than a method of contraception (Wilson & West 1995). The majority of items marketed as sex toys were aimed towards men, with the exception of massage wands. They were inexpensive and fashioned of shoddy, dangerous materials, such toxic plastic. These items, which were designed to be disposable, frequently served as pornographic props. In terms of colour and shape, the dildos and vibrators resembled the male penis. (Bardzell and Bardzell, 2011; Loe, 1999). The vibrator was a sign of active female sexuality by the middle of the 1990s, and the sex aid had evolved into a sex toy (Attwood 2005).

Plastic phalluses were long gone, and female consumers welcomed silicone dildos and vibrators in vibrant colours. These new sex toys stood out for their functionality and playfulness. Even the product names reflected this. Following its appearance in the 1998 television series *Sex and the City*, *The Rampant Rabbit* sparked a buying frenzy and sold

millions of copies (Kent & Brown 2006). Sex toys were increasingly offered as fashion items as a result of phenomena like *Sex and the City* (Attwood 2005). The size, composition, and battery life of sex toys continued to change throughout the ensuing years, but design continued to be the most significant change (Eaglin & Bardzell 2011). Along with other consumer goods, vibrators like the Infinity and Form received design honours (Kent & Brown 2006). These days, as digital technologies advance, sex toys continue to change. Mobile phones may be used to operate the vibrators, or a Bluetooth-enabled exerciser that provides feedback can be used to work out the pelvic muscles. Along with aesthetic and ergonomic improvements, a brand-new class of sex toys called designer sex toys has also been created. A dildo has been created by well-known designers Stefen Lindfors and Tom Dixon. When compared to the ordinary vibrator, which costs 25 euros, Dixon's Bone vibrator retails for 170 euros. Dildos are constructed out of peculiar materials like glass or wood. They are viewed less as a masturbation tool and more as a work of art or a collectible (Smith 2007). The sex toy has become a personal item that can be purchased as a gift or even exhibited at home thanks to new high-quality materials and the focus on design (Smith 2007; Kent & Brown 2006). According to Smith (2007), and Attwood (2005), high-end sex toys have sparked a conversation about sex toys as a question of taste and lifestyle. In Finland, the popularity of designer sex toys has increased. The manufacturer of wooden dildos has received financing from Tekes, a Finnish innovation funding organisation.

Many sex toy producers in the past have close links to the porn business. Today, sex toy businesses are founded by non-adult industry individuals who were motivated by their own personal experiences. (2011) (Bardzell & Bardzell). Designers at Jimmyjane have previously worked for Motorola and Nike. Lelo's founders were engineers at Ericsson, whereas those behind We-Vibe worked for Nortel (Bardzell & Bardzell, 2011). These new types of sex toy makers prefer to classify their items as consumer goods rather of being affiliated with the porn business since it makes marketing and selling sex toys simpler (Sharma, 2013; Forbes.com; Bardzell & Bardzell, 2011). The recontextualization of sex toys in the consumer products category rather than the adult entertainment category is greatly influenced by the transformation that has taken place in the production side of the industry.

2.6 Retail Environment and Sex Toys

In-home parties, specialised businesses both online and offline, as well as other locations like pharmacies and grocery stores, all sell sex toys. The terms sex shops (Schmidt & Malina 1997), erotic boutiques (Martin & Crewe 2016), sex stores (Martin & Crewe 2016), and sex emporia (Attwood 2005) have all been used to describe establishments that offer only sex-related goods. Terms that contain the term erotic are typically connected to businesses that cater to women. Erotica is a term that is more commonly used in the community than

pornography (Kontula 2008). Adult retailing, erotic retailing, and erotic consuming are all terms used to describe the sector (Kent & Brown 2006, Herbenick, 2007, Walther & Shoulten 2016).

In the 1950s, the first sex parlours of the contemporary period were founded. Male customers were targeted by the tiny boutiques, known as adult bookshops, which offered them pornographic literature (Schmidt & Malina 1997). With time, the shops began to sell sex devices in addition to their core sales item of pornography and other services like striptease and movies (Kent & Brown 2006; Martin 2015). These shops were situated either on the fringes of cities or in the red light area (Kent & Brown 2006; Kent 2005). In 1966, King's Sex, the country's first sex parlour, opened its doors in Helsinki's Punavuori neighbourhood, often known as the city's Reeperbahn (Helsingin uutiset 2013). King's Sex is still in operation, but many traditional sex establishments that sold pornography were forced to close their doors (Moisio 2015) or switch their entire focus to sex toys, as the sex establishment Antishop in Jyväskylä did (Majaniemi 2015). King's Sex is still open for business. Women saw conventional sex parlours as dangerous and impolite (Martin & Creve 2016; Kent & Brown 2006, 203). Women began to open their own sex establishments for female customers as a result (Malina & Schmidt 1997). The stores served as a substitute sexual environment for women (Loe 1999). Ironically, males were interested in a different location to buy sex toys as well and preferred female-oriented stores to typical sex stores (Loe 1999). The stores' façade and interior distinguish them distinct from conventional sex establishments. The classic sex stores and the new erotic boutiques might be considered as binary opposites. Erotic boutiques are seen as being bright, feminine-focused, and fashionable in contrast to typical sex stores, which are seen as being dark, macho, and sleazy (Martin & Crewe 2016). When erotic boutiques are in prominent locations, traditional sex businesses are concealed from the public view in outlying areas. Instead of the hidden windows seen in regular stores, erotic boutiques have windows that let light into the store. The use of colour highlights the distinctions between femininity and masculinity. As black is frequently used in designer stores because it is connected with seduction, Ann Summers employs pink to create a feminine environment. Friendly, knowledgeable staff members in female-focused sex stores provide consumers with guidance on various items and sexual health-related issues. (Martin & Creve, 2016, Bardzell & Bardzell, 2011, Loe 1999); Kent & Brown, 2006, Martin & Creve 2016).

The Ann Summers store in London and the Good Vibrations store in San Francisco were the first female-friendly stores to launch in the 1970s. In 1994, Sin City, Finland's first female-friendly and owned sex parlour, opened. Elämän Suola opened in Tampere five years later. The founders' personal unsatisfactory experiences with conventional sex stores led to the majority of female-owned sex shops in Finland and worldwide (Lappalainen 2011; Scmith & Malina 1997). Providing knowledge and guidance on matters pertaining to sexual health was

one of the philosophies underpinning sex establishments geared towards women (Attwood 2005, 394; Loe 1999). People go to sex stores when they want to learn more about sexuality (Kontula 2008). These businesses serve as instructors, according to Kent and Brown (2006), and experts, according to Loe (1999), who both online as well as offline (Reece, 2004, Schick, 2013). The sex toy business cannot ignore the current trend of sexual wellbeing (Eaglin & Bardzell 2011; Attwood 2005; Marjaniemi 2015). Pharmacies, gynaecologists, and sexologists collaborate with sex stores like Antishop and sex toy producers like Lelo (Majaniemi 2015). Numerous manufacturers emphasise sexual health issues in their communications and support the positive effects of their goods on sexual health with data from their own study. The politically driven female-friendly sex shops have changed into ones that offer sex gadgets as fashion items and tools for expressing lifestyle (Loe 1999). The high-end erotic stores Coco de Mer and Myla, which have just entered the market and sell luxury sex toys and lingerie, are the newest type of sex shop (Smith 2007). These businesses engage heavily in pricey advertising, create specialised retail experiences, and are in desirable locations (Martin 2015; Kent & Brown 2006). They provide their customers with a certain adult lifestyle and the chance to stand out by using fashionable items (Attwood 2005; Smith 2007). The success of these businesses (Coco de Mer was acquired by industry juggernaut Lovehoney in 2011) shows that physical sex parlours are still around and still have something to offer customers in the age of online shopping. Due of the sensitive nature of the product, not all customers prefer to visit a real store, which has an obvious influence on the sex toy business. Online commerce has consolidated under the control of a select few major businesses in recent years. Due of their prominence and scale, Lovehoney.com and Kaalimato.com from Finland are both regarded as trustworthy websites. Some businesses use the multichannel retailing model (Kent & Brown 2006), and these business owners claim that these two models complement one another (Majaniemi 2015). Consumers may readily compare items at a physical store and seek guidance from the sales staff there (Schmidt & Malina, 1997). Other merchants include several locations such pharmacies, department shops, supermarket stores, e-tailers, Amazon, and medical practitioners' waiting rooms.

2.7 Taboo Products and Sex Toys

According to Katsanis (1994), some goods, services, and ideas might be classified as being sexually explicit, rude, humiliating, unhealthy, or socially undesirable. Dealing with them is avoided for grounds of delicacy, decency, morality, and fear because they arouse feelings of aversion, disgust, offence, or indignation (Wilson & West 1981). Wilson & West (1981, 1995; Katsanis) and West (1995) referred to the items as unmentionables, socially sensitive (Shao and Hill 1994), objectionable (Barnes and Doston 1990), contentious (Rehman and Brooks 1987), and taboo (Sabri, 2010). A significant portion of study on contentious items

is done within the context of advertising, with the product or the way the campaign was done being the source of the issue. In the earlier research, some examples of the items that were deemed contentious are included in Table 2.

Reference	Example of products
Wilson & West 1981	contraceptives, female hygiene products, drugs, abortion, condoms, sex aids, pregnancy tests, death related services, venereal disease treatments, racial and religious prejudice.
Wilson & West 1995	death, death-related services, some defense products, terrorism, racial and religious prejudice, hard drugs soft drugs, and extreme political parties
Rehman & Brooks 1987	feminine hygiene products, women's undergarments, alcohol, pregnancy tests, contraceptives, and medication for hemorrhoids
Barnes & Dotson 1990	condoms, tampons, female hygiene products, female and male undergarments, and negro college fund
Katsanis 1994	personal hygiene products, cigarettes, hair replacement products, rifles, and fur coats
Waller 1999; Waller et al. 2005; Fam & Waller 2003	racially extreme groups, religious denominations, guns, funeral services, political parties, cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, underwear, condoms, contraceptives, female hygiene product, and sexual diseases
Sabri & Obermiller 2012; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes 2006	sexual and death themes in advertising such as sadomasochism and suicide

Products connected with death, politics, or race are also considered taboo, as are those related to personal cleanliness. All studies—aside from Wilson and West (1995) referred to health or hygiene goods as being debatable. Condoms, sex aids, and contraception are among the common sex-related items found in the health and hygiene category. The prior study on taboos has to be carefully evaluated because taboos change throughout time and place. What was formerly forbidden may now be mainstream, and vice versa; what is considered taboo in one region may be entirely normal in another (Waller 1999; Wilson & West 1981, Waller, 2005). It might be challenging to talk about taboo items (Wilson & West 1981). The mainstream media in Finland has not been enthusiastic about sex shop ads.

The advertising of significant sexual merchants like Huippukiva.fi, Kaalimato.com and Hot Lips has drawn criticism from the Finnish Council of Ethics in Advertising on several occasions in recent years. The council has declared that while the selling of sexual items is permissible, advertising of those products is acceptable. There are limitations on the day of the week, as well as which media can display commercials. A comment was also made on the

manner in which the ads for sex toys were carried out (kauppakamari.fi). Sex toys would most closely resemble the contentious product category that Wilson and West (1981) defined as goods that are acceptable by society but disapproved of by customers out of humiliation (Helweg-Larsen & Collins 1994; Rehman & Brooks 1987). Condoms and other socially sensitive goods can cause humiliation. Taboo items have an impact on a person by making them feel embarrassed when used or purchased (Helweg-Larsen & Collins 1994). According to Talvio (2011), purchasing sex toys still makes people feel embarrassed, although not as much as in the past. It is particularly uncomfortable to visit a sex shop while other customers may be present (Talvio 2011). Embarrassment is defined as "A feeling of self-consciousness, shame, or awkwardness" by the Oxford Dictionary. We experience sensations of humiliation when we are with other people because we become more self-conscious. Sex toys suit the bill for the contentious product category Katkanis (1994) proposed. Private but thought to be useful products. Public discussion on private items is prohibited. As a result, it may be said that discussing sex toys is forbidden in discussion but not in behaviour (Kim, 2004).

2.8 Sex Toys, More Acceptable

As stated by Kristel, Tetlock, Elson, Lerner and Green (2000), 'in all societies, the so-called perceived boundaries of the unthinkable or not allowed tend to shift over time'. In other words, once forbidden, classed as a crime, could become a social norm one day. As has been the case with the same-sex people. These kinds of relationships were outlawed in most countries during the first part of the 20th century but there has been a gradual change and acceptance of this kind of sexual orientation in many countries around the world. Similarly, the taboo nature of sex toys has also become less obvious to some extent, at least in the societies which are Western, according to Pellandini-Simányi (2014). There could be different ways and routes through which consumption of taboos related products like sex toys may change. First, slow and gradual evolution of different kind of practices as well as values in different societies, for example, liberalization, might change taboos over time. Secondly, a newer generation or type, entering a particular culture, society or practice in which that taboo is present can result in this kind of gradual change. Thirdly, new type of technology might result in changes that might affect peoples' norms of consumption, for example, online sex shops in that area. Finally, in some instances, some institutions or some intellectual people might act as agents that would cause change, for example, sex educators in industry or other artists.

Products which are related to sexuality are a good example of liberalization in a society and making taboos a norm (Kent & Brown, 2006, Hakim, 2015). In the past, sex toys might be classified as taboo products, hence unmentionable, but in the present times, sex toys are becoming more and more common (Kontula, 2009, Herbenick, 2009, Reece, 2009). Use of sex toys privately might not be considered 'perverted' (Kontula, 2009) but it could also be classed as part of sexual health wellness (Forbes, 2016, Eaglin & Bardzell, 2011). Therefore, the social restrictions when it comes to buying, selling and usage of sex toys seem to have been decreasing (Daneback, 2011; Coulmont & Hubbard, 2010, Doring, 2009; Kent & Brown, 2006, Hakim, 2015). When compared to this background, it raises the question of why consumers still rarely discuss sex toys publically and therefore try to keep such kind of personal products private. In terms used by Wilson and West's (1981), sex toys might be classed as part of category of unmentionable products that is fully acceptable in a society, and any restrictions that exist to openly buy or use them are held by the people themselves.

2.9 Covid 19, A cause of increase in Sex Toys Usage

During the pandemic, many people had very limited access or opportunity for physical as well as recreational type of sex. Sexual acts could be performed in different forms. Physical closeness and intimate relationship are one form of these activities. There are other forms of this sexual activity that might involve kissing, conversations, massages, holding hands or physical cuddling. Also, sex is needed to reproduce and continuity of human species. It could also have impact on consumers' mental health, job performance and general life satisfaction. (Skałacka and Gerymski, 2019, Berdychevsky and Carr, 2020). Because of Covid pandemic, some governments suggested their public to avoid kissing, try different sex positions to avoid face to face interaction, also to wear mask while having sex, to use dental dams and condoms, masturbate together but keeping a safe distance doing so and cleaning sex toys thoroughly and regularly. (Eleuteri, 2022). Taking into account these issues, more consumers were lured to use the sex toys in order to fulfil their sexual desires.

During the pandemic, along with the general utility items, when people resorted to buying items in a panic way, it also included the purchase of sex toys. (Abgarian, 2020). The sale of online sex dolls, sex toys and lingerie in the Covid Pandemic of Covid-19 lockdowns. (Lee, 2020)

2.10 Concept of Cultural and Demographic Characteristics

The rise of the word “culture” appear to come from European countries. In German language, the word “Kultur” came up during the 18th century and referred to a particular civilization. Almost 100 years after that mention, it was also noted that French language used the expression “culture”, and it was found in the Emile Littré’s 19th century dictionary and it was thought to be based on its supposedly Latin roots “cultura”, which was used to describe cultivation as well as local farming activities. In the 20th century that this particular word would become popular in that time’s Anglo-Saxons languages. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn defined “Culture: as a critical presentation of different concepts and definition” which was written in 1952. Later more than 160 definitions were collected, they found that most of the culture definitions were at different points taken from work of many anthropologists who were studying mainly the primitive societies. Hence, that did not show many sides the modern societies consumers live in in this day and age. They described that defining different types of cultures was like to build some kind of puzzle and it needed many parts to complete it in those contexts (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

These days, the word “culture” may also include the arts as well as customs or and habits that can describe any particular society, it could be a nation or maybe belief systems, values, or/and behaviour as well as material objects which would make up peoples way of particular life in a society, any knowledge which is passed from one particular or typical generation to any next and this is not necessarily related to the human beings. A culture may include many dimensions which could normally be identified. In turn, they are specific to all groups of people. Tylor (1913) defines a culture as “a complicated and connected set of different elements, consisting of knowledge as well as beliefs or different values and many other types of skills as well as habits gained by different human as a part of any particular society.” These elements could be put together into different six necessary elemental categories: language and peoples’ beliefs, social institutions, aesthetics and material culture.

Language is considered as a base of a cultural recognition. Normally, every group of people which share the similar culture may speak similar language, that could be from different peoples tribes to a complicated multinational culture or so. It may be considered an important link between many different members of the similar group. Looking from a business and a commercial point of view, the existing knowledge of any local society language is hugely important. Although during the previous 30 years,

the English has become an internationally recognised business language and so approaching consumers in different cultures require a very good and perfect use of many different local languages.

Believes whether religions and superstitions are a key factor. From a global point of perspective, there are many countries which share the similar types of beliefs, and its actual importance may vary and is not essentially or normally at the similar strength or intensity. Business thinking of marketing as well as advertising in different cultures or societies where beliefs of people have a good and more strong impact on consumers wants and needs, normally has a very pin point positioning so that it is not in disagreement with its social and local norms and this way not being rejected in the process. At some small or lower scale, people from any particular country may or may not share different kind of beliefs and their opinions and this way could create different or similar sub-cultures in a particular country.

A social institution could also be defined in terms of “a complexity of positions, as well as roles, norms as well as values which are part of particular kinds of different social structures and that way organise relatively in a more stable pattern of human activity in dealing with fundamental different issues that could be part of producing and important life-sustaining resources, or it could be in reproducing individuals as well as in sustaining the important and viable society structures in some environment.” (Turner, 1997). So this kind of institutions are normally sometimes part of any country’s organizations as well as part of its different citizens’ lives, and thus because of this, it may be part of their own society and culture too. The acculturation type is based on the issue of integrating the different cultural values carried out by a group of human from other groups and individuals. Normally this process is done at the beginning of peoples’ lives. Attending school for education is one of the very important steps of this vital process, because here the citizens learn about the rules, at the same time, what is defined as right/wrong by their own respective culture. Also, they attain the approval of their hierarchy in an accepted system of appraisals and punishments.

Aesthetics is normally present in every different types of cultures which is responsible for regrouping arts as well as folklore music, it could be drama or dance. As described by Cuche (2004), this particular important aspect of culture defines different peoples’ perception of beauty. So that this factor could also be very different when taking into account the sub cultures in any society. From a totally different commercial point of view, businesses which are working with creativity should also

research as well as adapt the production line to this kind of particular point of view because as if they do not do that then their products might be going to be classed as non-aesthetics and then could be rejected in the process. Material culture would normally include two aspects, first technology and then second economy. Developments in technology could normally modify people's different or similar way of life and in these days, that is valid even more so before. In order to analyse any specific culture in question or consideration, it is very much important to find out at which condition or state of their own technological development these countries or societies are and then find how do they produce goods as well as some ways to communicate. Other part is their economy, whether the basic barter trading economy to much more complex capitalistic economy, and this aspect is responsible for defining the way local consumers are organized as well as the methods through which they may or would create richness in a society.

2.11 Difference in Cultural and Demographic Characteristics

There are several elements included in the term of cultural and demographics characteristics and these different parts usually would result in all single cultures different from each other. So, these aspects of cultures might build individuals' traits or it could be vision or state of their minds. So, it could be very crucial part to understand a particular country's consumer's behavior. Also, normally, what could be accepted as normal in one culture could be refused for some reason or reasons in a different culture. From marketing point of view, culture as well as consumer behavior are normally very closely related. This first part of interest in this regard is their local culture, which could be in the forms of their beliefs and habits. Here this analysis could be very crucial to very importantly build an efficient marketing strategy as well as being properly accepted by any company's target customers.

2.12 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a very basic as well as very exciting aspect which companies or marketers need to study and then to understand and therefore influence their respective targeted consumers purchasing intentions or decisions and thus change the products or strategy when required. Consumer behavior could be described as the mental and or emotional, and also their physical activities which consumers engage in while they select, purchase, use, and dispose of different products and also

different services in order to satisfy their own needs as well as their desires. (Wilkie, 1994) This aspect is very crucial and is part in of every single consumer. In this way, most of the time, consumers might not actually realise that their behavior could be controlled or manipulated. The people might not be aware of the fact that the external influences might as well guide their minds in their decision to buying. Most of the time, they might not be thinking about their internal thoughts that cause them to purchase a particular product and service.

The customer's decision making aspect might be dependent on the particular culture of that consumer and also on the type of product or service that that customer is thinking of buying. For different products, they would not normally think wether to buy them on in some case not. These products or services might be necessary for their own lives, and their buying would be made that could be in a impulsive manner. On the other hand, for some other type of products or services, their purchase decisions mightl well be the consequence of a long thought process that companies could normally study in detail and so understand. These Companies' success would primarily be dependent on the ability to understand the process and after that their ability to make an influence on the the final buying decision of their respective targeted consumers.

2.13 Global and Particular Consumer Culture

This world has become an international or globalized world. Everything feels very close and very easy to get by. Goods or services, capital or technology, raw materials as well as knowledge, ideas move fairly easily between different countries as well as frontiers. Along with development of the new technologies and techniques for example Internet and ease with which we can travel as well as communicate with other states has helped us to a new concept that can be classed as a diffusion of a very global culture. So, this trend is in general named as Globalization. Described by Joseph Stiglitz, an economist as well as a holder of the Nobel Prize, he defined Globalization as the closer getting together of the countries and their respective people of the world with the the enormous reduction of costs of internaional and domestic transportation as well as communication, and at the same time breaking down or abolition of artificial border barriers to make it easier for flows of different goods and different services, the capital, the knowledge, different people across many different borders.

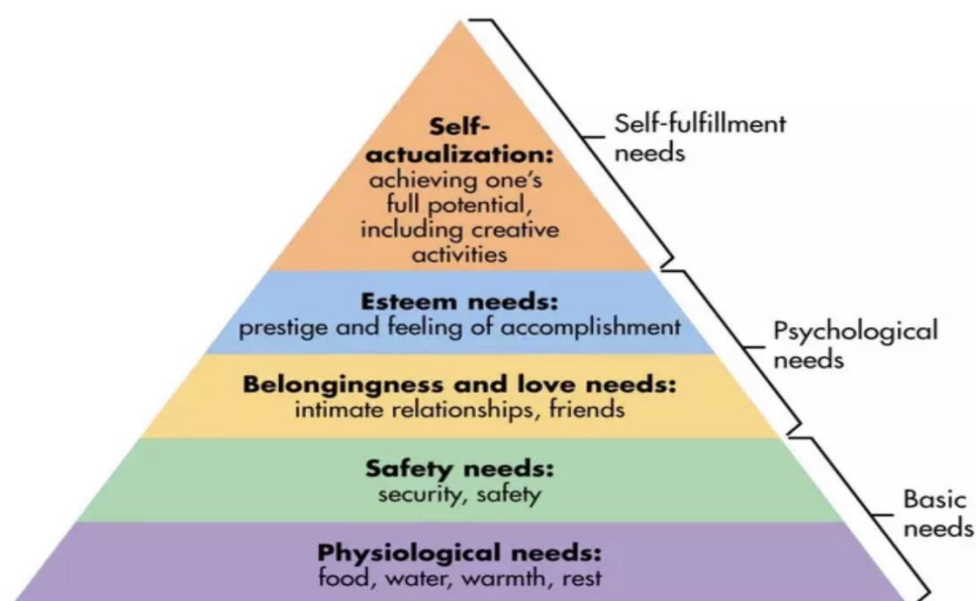
It could be persumed with globalization that clear reality that people are all getting together towards a more very modern lifestyle. In this regard, the main idea

behind this is that all the scientific knowledge and all the new technology might control our nature and more importantly, at the same time improve our human existence (Firat, 1995). There are different societies which are all moving at their different own pace, and these are from a conventional or traditional to more usually modern way of life in societies. Also, access to Technologies in different countries is becoming more and more easier and that way it tries to improve peoples' living standards and because of this, consumers normally become more and more independent as from the controls of their normal commu life. When it is analysed about it, appliances seem to make consumers' day to day existence easier and simpler than ever before. While searching for information about all things is more simpler and at the same time it does not require any amount of time as well as effort by the consumer and they can communicate with other people at a large or great distance and it can be done in a very immediate manner. So it can be stated that all these different facilities lead people to a globalisation of this world and in turn to a possibly global as well as more modern culture, it is mainly the reason the present consumers throughout in this world consequently have very similar responses to all these new technology products and also these product innovations (Usunier & Lee, 2005).

However, when cultures and consumer behaviors are studied and analysed in a deep and concrete way, some very special differences emerge in among different countries. By looking once again more at the young people's behaviours example, it could be noted that though similar conditions might be in existence, the manner these kind of similar or same conditions are reacted to in their real life vary a lot depending on the consumers' background. So, there is another different perspective, which is opposite to the method that could be approached. It is called an emic's perspective. In a way, this perspective tries to describe a culture depending on the culture category and at the same time the experiences of their insiders in that culture (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010). R]. This could mean that different people are going to have a different reaction based on their perceived values, their perceived beliefs and their own cultures. Therefore, although a global consumer culture might be looking to be present around in different countries, this reality that many particular different consumer cultures are also still actual normality and this can not be ignored. Businesses are very well aware of this issue, so many of these businesses decide in studying and analysing culture whereby making use of the the emic perspective.

In order to better understand how a particular consumer culture and any related behaviour might resist or react slowly over the diffusion of a so-called global culture, it would be important to analyse Maslow's theory of hierarchy of human needs. Abraham Maslow was a very well-known famous American psychologist who managed to develop a very famous pyramid in the form of hierarchy of human needs theory in the 1940-1950's time period. His theory still remains in use and is used in order to understand and analyse basic human motivation, human training management for controlling these needs as well as people's personal development. This idea which was behind Abraham Maslow's theory was that people were and still are motivated by some basic human needs, and these needs are arranged in a hierarchical way. According to his description, each human need is normally satisfied and fulfilled in its turn. Mostly people would start with the very first needs which would normally start with the very most obvious human needs to survive him or herself, only once these basic needs are met and satisfied then people would normally be able to then satisfy their higher needs like influence and or personal development etc. These hierarchy of needs are formed in an ascending order, thus firstly beginning with as illustrated below, with most basic human needs, these 5 human needs are the followings: 1) Physiological needs, 2) Safety needs, 3) Social needs, 4) self Esteem and 5) Self-Actualization needs (seen in figure 2).

Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy or Pyramid of Human Needs



The figure which is shown above displays the five basic human needs as described in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. These five human needs are normally represented as shown in a pyramid shape because generally as it is noted that in order to satisfy someone's highest needs up the pyramid, their lowest level human needs need to first be fulfilled accordingly. As described by Maslow, once an individual takes care or deals with one of his or her basic or physiological needs which includes food or water, his or her shelter and when he or she feels safe or secure, only after that some of his needs for love or belonging to someone or something might arise to the front of his or her mind and subsequently life. Their need for or to respect any of their work mates or colleagues and also for their self-respect would then come after this, and in turn, according to Maslow, the very final or last need is described by Maslow as self-actualization. Which is actually about achieving their's self-fulfillment. This is classed as the desire where to become or reach a certain ambition that someone has the ability to be, in other words, to achieve all and everything to which one has the capability of, and it is to the limit that it sometimes results in making a real and big difference in this World we live in (Buckley, 1997). Those people who could achieve this high level of self-actualisation while living in any society or culture are usually the ones who would have normally very successful life or career, and who would be also financially secure in order to make sure that their basic first physical needs are met at earlier stage, and also who would probably have already acquired or won the respect from and huge applaud of their immediate social circle or group.

Over the previous many years, Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs has been many times translated and there are quite a number of some basic perceived assumptions that are part of this theory. The first thing to assume is that all lower level needs normally have to be satisfied properly before any upper level needs or desires could become a motivation for the people. Then the second perceived assumption is described as that when a need is fully satisfied, it might no longer be used to serve as some kind of motivator. The third assumption is where there are many more methods etc to satisfy people's needs at higher level as compared to people's lower level needs from the pyramid. It looks that some of these perceived assumptions might appear in Maslow's original theory, where as some assumptions appear from some other researchers studies. On the other hand, some assumptions were laterly modified by Maslow in his updated theory by himself. In marketing, Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs and any associated or related assumptions about these needs have largely

helped many of researchers at international level. Maslow's hierarchy or pyramid of human needs can also be used in order to explain human motivation in some areas for example HR management etc and also sales management studies. Also, from a consumer behaviour's point of view, it also might help to understand and explain some of the behaviors of peoples' like for example their independent holidays as well as a rise in peoples' participation in adventure sports.

While looking at the consumer's habits and culture, it also appears that this theory might not be really valid in all the World cultures. As in some countries as well as in some societies, it is seen that the need of self-actualization might be too much given importance and encouraged at the highest level. Whereas in certain other less developed or developing countries, some people sometimes might deprive themselves of their basic human needs like for example, food or security in order to afford a higher level need like a refrigerator. This would help the man turn satisfy their own social status in their society and their self esteemed needs before their other basic human needs. This might result to some particular consumers like jumping up the pyramid by going to their higher human needs before their basic human needs. So, this example would show that consumers behaviors might be different from one country to another different country. In order to be successful in a local market, international companies are forced to study any local cultures of the consumers of the country in their target sight. Although a global culture is appearing slowly with the passage of time but at the same time, some specific characteristics are still present and companies need to take these into account.

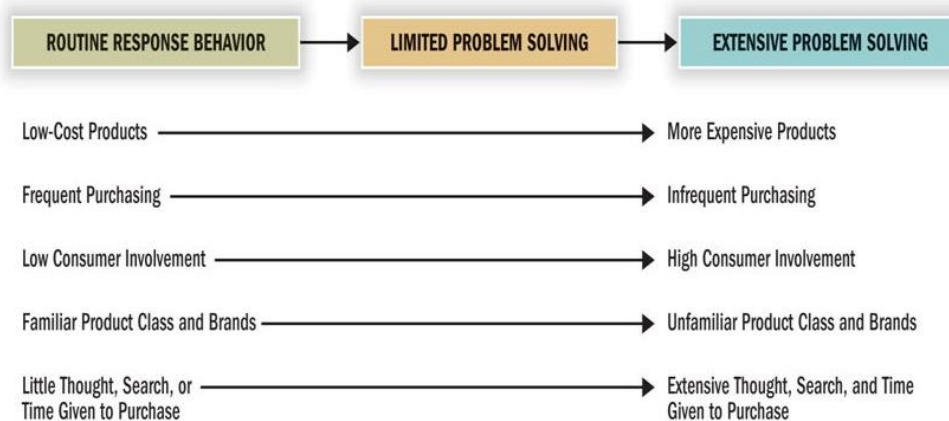
2.14 Consumer Decision Making Model

The models of consumer decision making appear to be of very important use for business world as well as their marketing departments in order to help them understand how their potential consumers would make their normal purchasing decisions. This model in turn provides businesses with some clarity in marketing and would encourage businesses find some very important strategies in order to help and influence the final purchasing decisions of these businesses' potential customers. One of the important things which is related to this process of customers decision making is to understand is the amount of effort customers put into their purchasing decisions is different which depending on the product and service these consumers would plan to buy. For consumers, some of the purchasing decisions are much more important for

consumers than others. Also, some times they might just purchase a products and services in an a way which would be impulsive. For example, food buying, water or clothes normally would not need a very strong thinking when buying them. Where as, at other times, to reach a purchasing decision might take some more time and thinking. Someone might spend their few days or even few weeks trying to think about some very important items to purchase for example new home. So this fact of consumer decision making might be made more complicated bybecause of the fact that in peoples' actual environmental information and their potential choices might turn up in very different ways.

A very important and interesting theory which could here be discussed about consumers different reactions depending on different type of these products and services the consumers want to buy would be Continuum Theory. As it can be seen in the below figure, this theory is normally described by different levels of responses while making a decision about products or services namely response behavior of routine, problem solving which is limited and also extensive problem solution process.

Figure 3: Continuum behaviour of buying



According to the Continuum theory, consumers' own behavior and their decisions usually are not the same and it all most of time depends on if the consumers are dealing with some Extended problem solving or it could be limited problem solving, or maybe a decision making which could be habitual or like a habit without much thought. It is suggested that depending on the consumers experiences and their knowledge about the products, some consumers might make very quick purchasing

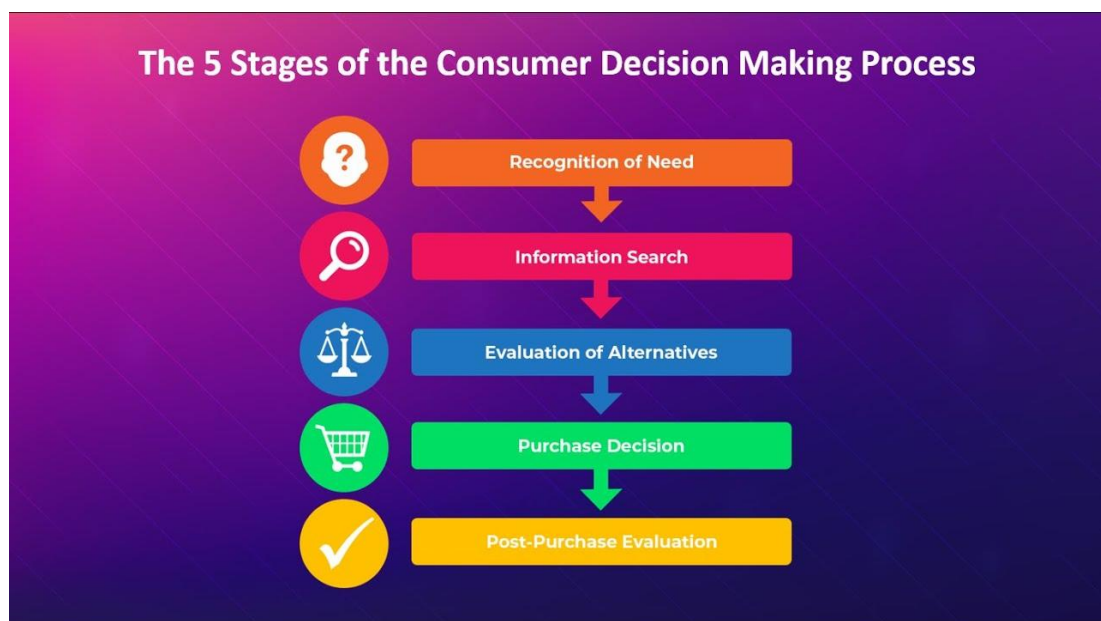
decisions where as other consumers might want to get some more information or details and be much more involved while they make a decision before they purchase some product and service. This involvement level shows how customers are personally interested these consumers are while consuming that particular product or service. Also the information amount as well as the details in those information, they would need in order to make a particular purchasing decision. This type and level of involvement by the consumer involved in their buying decisions might be described a continuum to that which could be fairly routine for these consumer. There could also be decisions that would require these consumers to have extensive thoughts resulting in some high level of consumer involvement. This is very important to understand that if a decision is less, if it is high, or it could be limited for a consumer, this involvement would normally vary by consumer and not by product or service.

A decision that is made after extended problem solving is related more closely to what is termed as the traditional decision making process. Consumers might start this kind of process while they might think that the result of a product or service which they were going to buy could be risky in cases when they usually do not know well about that product or service. It could also be the case that the consumer might be dealing with a not very frequent buying for a particular product. So, in this case, the consumer would normally want to try to gather many details about the product or service as possible. After that, the consumer would make evaluation all the alternatives which are available at that point in time of that product or service before they finally make a decision. Where as the problem solving that is limited in nature can be much simpler than this. In this scenario, consumers might not be too much motivated or feel the need to look for any or some information related to that product. Hence, they would not want to evaluate all or any alternative for that matter fully and rigorously. This situation could arise because of the reason that the consumers could be in a position where they are already familiar with that product or service which they were planning or thinking to purchase and/or because the price for them might not be too important factor. In this case, the consumers would use a more simpler process to make a decision in order to choose a product or service from different choices. This last point in this model is termed as routine response behaviours. It is concerned with small or sometimes none conscious effort from the consumer side. As it has already been mentioned earlier, there could be many purchasing decisions which could be very common and the consumers might not normally realize that they are making these

decision. Some of these products and services are sometimes so essential and important for consumers' lives that they do not even bother to think about looking to get any further details and to see if there were any other viable alternative products. Buying them for those consumers would be simply a normal routine.

If there are products and services etc which could be put into different classes which are mentioned in this consumer's routine response type of behaviour, if they could be eliminated, it will be clearly shown that consumers normally pass through many different steps until they decide to buy a product or service in which they were showing any interest. These many encountered steps taken by the consumers are shown in the below figure. These steps show these different stages of potential customer's decision making procedure in their normal lives.

Figure 4: Different Stages in the Consumer Decision Making



The five steps shown above can be divided as three target groups. First three steps, recognition of need, searching for information and then next evaluation of alternative products or services could be grouped into pre-purchase, whereas choosing the product would be put into the purchasing process itself and lastly, consumption of the product or service and then evaluating the outcome would be described as the post-purchase procedure of the consumer.

2.14.1 Problem Recognition

The first step of decision making for a consumer is recognising a problem. This is the stage where a consumer would feel the need for a particular product or service.

He or she would realise that something is missing in their life. This would cause the consumer to feel the discrepancy and some kind of gap in their life which would result into creating a desire in that consumer and then motivate that potential customer to resolve that issue which he or she has just recognised. This is problem recognition.

Consumers have to deal with new situations in their lives and these situations might result in creating new needs for consumers. These needs might not be part of their lives but changing circumstances might result in the creation of these needs. For example, potential arrival of a baby would create new and different needs for the parents who would feel the need to buy the products related to the baby's birth.

In some cases, some consumers may feel the want to buy some new products or services because of their change in circumstances. These wants may not be as important as needs but still they might feel the desire to fulfill those wants. For example, a visitor going abroad to a different country might want to buy the products which he or she might want to utilise while abroad.

Because of the innovation and new technologies, more and more new products and services are coming to the market and these products might have the potential to become the need of the consumers with time. For example, smart TV or smart phones have become a part of everyday life and many consumers feel the need for them even though they were living without them before their arrival to the market. At the same time, buying one product might encourage a consumer to buy some accompanying products to make good use of the first product. For example, buying a computer would encourage a consumer to buy a mouse, speakers, bluetooth devices and so on.

Sometimes, consumers are not satisfied with their existing product or service and they might feel the need to buy some other product or service. The existing product might not be doing what it is supposed to do. In other cases, the consumer may feel the need to use some features which are not in their existing product and would want to upgrade to a newer or better version.

The above explained reasons normally create the need or want for the consumers to buy a particular product or service. Although this seems like a natural process, the marketers and businesses are also responsible in creating that need by making the consumers realise that something is missing or short or have a deficiency in their existing product. This stimulation of the problem recognition also needs to be taken into consideration while looking at the consumer behaviour.

2.14.2 Information Search

Once a consumer recognises that there is something missing in their life, they would need proper information to solve that gap in their needs and wants. They would normally try to lessen that uncertainty they would have about the type of product or service they were hoping to purchase. This would result in consumers choosing between many alternative products and services. There are different types of searches which consumers can go through during this phase. These could be Internal search, External Search and some accidental way to search.

Internal search is the first method and it refers to consumer's own personal memory. Most of the time, people already have knowledge regarding many services and products. So, when these consumers would need to make a choice about some purchasing decision, they would generally search into their own personal memory in order to see if they have any details about their desired products and services. In this case they would use that knowledge to make a purchasing decision with this information.

But what happens most of the times is that the information most consumers already have might not be enough or adequate in order to make a purchasing decision and thus they would require some external source of knowledge. In these kind of situations, the consumers would use any source of information available to them. They could do some research on the internet, could read some articles about the required products and services, they might even go into the stores which are selling these products, they could discuss it with their family, friends, colleagues and then look at the ads in the papers. The businesses would want to influence these consumers decision in this case. Companies advertise all the time and this affects the knowledge of consumers even though they might not be thinking of buying these advertised products but the new attractive packaging or new features could trigger the consumer into buying these products and services. The Daily exposure to marketing materials by the companies, promotions for sales and many other marketing techniques might result into what is called as the accidental method of searching about products and services. In marketing terms, a huge portion of consumer exposure to different products happen at the pre purchase level even sometimes the consumers might not be looking for those product information.

This way, when the consumers would finish their research with required details and would be at a stage where they would be ready to make a decision whether to buy or not to buy a product. They might go through a long list of products in doing so.

2.14.3 Alternatives Evaluation

There are many more choices and alternative products available in the current markets and this would cause the consumer to decide about which product to choose very difficult in this whole purchasing process. When a customer would decide which product or service to choose from a list of many alternative products and services, this would be termed as a set of alternatives for that consumer. There are different types of possible alternative sets that could be made and these alternative sets are called an evoked set. Where as when the consumer makes a decision which sets to consider actually, these sets would be called as consideration set. The evoked set might contain a small number of alternatives and because of that, the objective of a business would be to make it possible that their products and services on offer are included in this evoked set in order to have a chance of being selected by the consumer.

2.14.4 Product Choice

After gathering and evaluating all the available and any relevant choices of products and services, the next phase for consumers is to choose one of the products. There are evaluation criteria where by the consumers would evaluate all these alternative products and services. This criteria is based on the perceived merits as well as advantages and disadvantages of these products which are in the competing list. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010). This criteria is important to go through products and services differ from each other, even in slightest of the terms. Consumers are going to make these choosing decisions based on these small or big differences. Consumers would normally use the determinant qualities or features which consumers would use to choose between different products and services (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010).

2.14.5 Consumption and Evaluation

The consumption of the purchased product or service occurs in the post purchase or after sale process. The consumer would normally consume that particular product or service and also evaluate its pros and cons. This time of total consumptions

is different for different products and services. It could be only few seconds of consumption like for example, a soft drink or it could be few hours, like for example, watching a movie. It could also last into few to many years as is the case in terms of White goods in a house hold or a piano for playing music. The process of evaluation is the second part of this process where by the consumer would try to see whether the product or service was worth the Money or effort for them. They would compare the perceived value of the product or service to the actual value they received and then decide if it was a good purchase. Their satisfaction could be lower than expected or sometime some products or services could turn out to be better than what consumer was expecting. The last step is very important for the businesses because they can use the satisfaction of their customers to promote their products and customers to more potential consumers.

2.15 Predicting Consumers Behavioral Intentions: Planned Behaviour Theory

Although each customer has a unique brain and decision-making process, they all go through the same phases of thought when they choose what to buy. As marketers, we try to comprehend how consumers make decisions in order to influence them to buy our goods. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is one of the numerous strategies employed by marketers to comprehend this procedure.

For both practitioners and scholars, comprehending consumer behaviour is the Holy Grail. Investigating customer sentiments is one approach to forecast consumer behaviour. One of the factors driving the demand for sex toys was indicated in the previous part, which was our society's sex positive views. Positive customer attitudes are vital when it comes to items that deal with sexual behaviour. Thanks to social marketing initiatives for safe sex practises, condom usage and purchase have long been considered socially acceptable (Wilson & West 1995). Knowing the reasons behind people's sentiments is crucial when attempting to change consumer attitudes.

In addition to measuring attitudes, the Fishbein multiattribute model (Fishbein 1963) also explains why a person decides to act in a particular way. According to the concept, a person's attitude towards an object depends on their beliefs about the object (e.g., that sex toys are user-friendly) and their assessment of those beliefs (e.g., that sex toys that are user-friendly are beneficial) (Fishbein 1963). In the multiattribute approach, we might have a favourable opinion of something without necessarily purchasing it.

In the case of condoms, the majority of individuals have a favourable opinion of them yet may find it difficult to buy them out of embarrassment. In these circumstances, it is preferable to employ behaviour models that assess attitudes towards condom use as opposed to condoms themselves. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), a thorough model of human behaviour based on the multiattribute model, is one example of such a model. TPB has been used to explain a number of behaviours, including safe sex practises (Albarracin 2001, Sheppard 1988, Sheeran 2002, Godin & Kok 1996, Armitage & Conner 2001). TPB is largely supported by empirical data.

TPB claims that behavioural intentions may be used to predict behaviour. The possibility that a person will participate in a particular behaviour is known as behavioural intention. Consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which in turn are generated from the underlying behavioural, normative, and control beliefs, can be used to predict intentions. Godin & Kok 1996; Ajzen 1991, 192; Armitage & Conner 2001; Sheeran 2002). Figure 1 shows the TPB behavior's constituent parts.

According to TPB, behavioural beliefs form the basis of one's attitude towards a behaviour. These are the expected adverse and advantageous effects of the behaviour. In order to attain the desired consequences and prevent the unfavourable effects, a person will develop a positive attitude towards the behaviour (Deci & Ryan 1985). Our social environment in addition to our mindset affects how we behave. Subjective norms quantify the effects of society on behaviour. Subjective norms are predicated on normative assumptions about what friends and family members, among others, would think of the behaviour. In socially delicate product categories like sex toys, social acceptability of others is very important. We often avoid engaging in a behaviour in public or at all if we think that others would not approve of it. Perceived behavioural control, or the effect of elements that could promote or discourage behaviour, is the third element in the TPB model (Ajzen 1991).

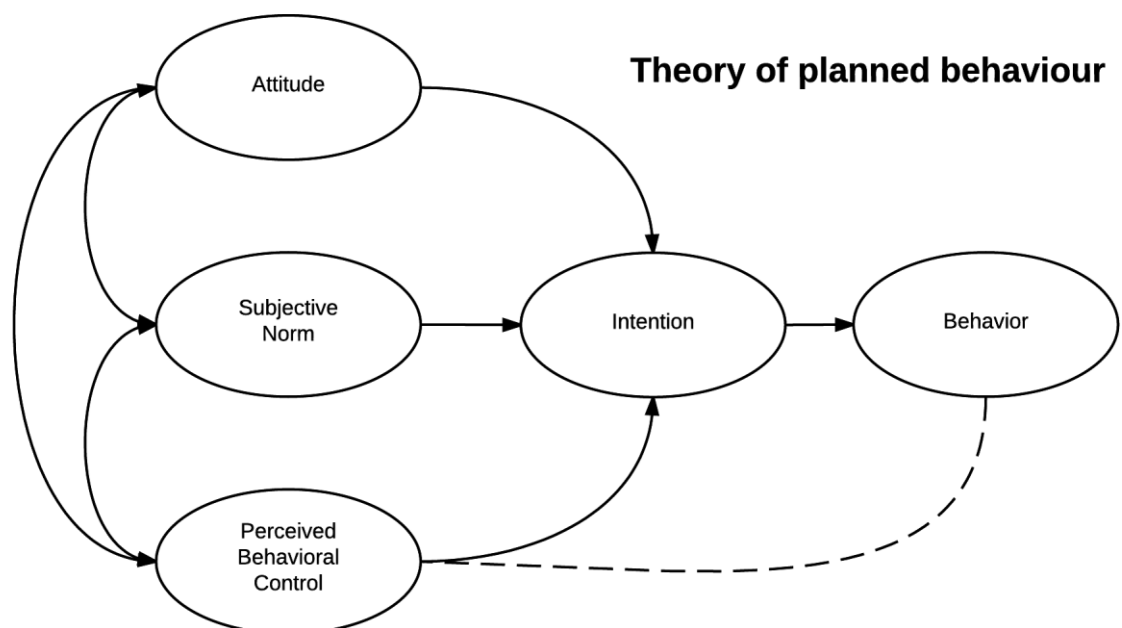
It has been proposed that using previous behaviour as a predictor of intents might enhance the TPB's capacity for prediction. Intentions have been shown to be significantly influenced by past behaviour (Conner & Armitage 1998; Sheeran & Taylor 1999), occasionally to the exclusion of TPB factors (Sutton et al. 1999). Since intentions are tempered by beliefs, the original TPB model predicts that demographic considerations shouldn't have an impact on them (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005). However,

it has been discovered that demographic variables like age and gender have an impact on intentions (Sheeran & Taylor 1999).

2.15.1 Behavioural Attitude

Each of us has countless attitudes, which are relatively constant assessments of both objects and people. We have opinions on our relatives, friends, acquaintances, politics, musical tastes, and a lot more. Additionally, while certain attitudes are passed down from our parents, other attitudes are developed via both direct and indirect encounters. Predispositions to behave or assess an object or thing favourably or unfavourably are known as attitudes. The opinions we have about items have an impact on our likelihood of making a purchase. Attitudes are made up of three parts: affect, behaviour, and cognition. Affect: A consumer's thoughts, feelings, and emotions that help them convey their opinions about a product. Behaviour: The actions the consumer plans to take in relation to the product. Consumer cognition refers to ideas and opinions they have about a product.

Figure 5: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991)



These three elements together make up and influence our attitudes, which in turn influence our actions. Consumers first consider the good or service (cognition), then consider their emotions towards it (affect), and finally act (behaviour). Because our attitudes strongly predict behaviour under specific circumstances, consumers

develop attitudes towards a particular behaviour and are motivated or predisposed to act on those attitudes. However, there isn't always a perfect match between what consumers say they think and what they really do. In other words, customers don't always follow through on their good attitudes about behaviours.

The consumer's attitude towards the behaviour, or, to put it another way, their assessment of how favourable or unfavourable it is to engage in the behaviour in question, is the first factor in the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Because it is considered that an attitude towards a behaviour leads to a certain outcome, attitudes towards a behaviour are often measured by taking into account a consumer's beliefs. This provides marketers the ability to anticipate possible outcomes, which gives us some influence over how to plan and build a customer experience. The likelihood of behaviour or action increases with the strength of the attitude.

2.15.2 Subjective Norms

The consumer's perception of whether or not most people agree with the behaviour is referred to as subjective norms, which is the second component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Do the consumer's peers believe the behaviour is appropriate? This is mostly based on the consumer's assessment of what his or her closest friends and family would think about him or her engaging in or refraining from engaging in the behaviour. Consumers' perceptions of social pressure from others to behave in a way that compels them to agree with those people's opinions serve as the basis for subjective standards. People crave the support of those they esteem, thus whether we receive that support or not has an impact on our actions.

2.15.3 Perceived Behavioral Control

The third and final component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is Perceived Behavioural Control. According to the consumer's view of how difficult or simple the behaviour will be to do, perceived behavioural control refers to the perceived presence of circumstances that may facilitate or impede the performance of a behaviour. The degree to which a customer thinks they can really carry out the behaviour varies depending on the circumstance and the activity. Perceived behavioural control may indirectly or directly affect behaviour depending on how it is used. Beliefs based on prior experiences with the behaviour or on seeing others' experiences with the behaviour have an impact on perceived behavioural control.

2.16 Research strategy

Previous studies on the socio-historical patterning of consumption shows that the social and demographic structures systematically influence consumption (Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Allen, 2002; Ustuner & Holt, 2007; Holt, 1998; Vikas, 2015). There is contradiction which arises when participants want to be go along with their cultures but at the same time legitimize their choice for any taboo related products such as sex toys which is against gendered norms. Their desire for the fulfilment of product choice which is both socially and personally satisfactory could be a struggle to resolve another issue: between conformance to gendered norm in any society and their own independent identity, both of which are important elements in consumer choices. Thus, the consumption of a sex toys and related products might change from an expression of consumer's personal identity to an expression of both personal and collective identity as it would no longer remain in the realm of an intimate as well as private consumption decision.

This research study explored the idea as how these factors might affect consumers' intentions to purchase of sex toys. Consumers intentions to purchase sex toys seem to be affected by factors like privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics. The aim of this research study is investigating these factors which may affect consumers intention to purchase sex toys.

2.16 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the past literature to see what kind of research had already been done on consumers intentions to purchase of sex toys. It was established that there was not a great deal of research available on this topic with some articles mentioned in the chapter. A conceptual framework was developed based on the outcome from this literature.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section details the course of action which was taken to answer the research questions. It begins with stating the methodology behind the study, as well as how it was designed. Later, a detailed descriptions of the stimuli used, the data collection, and the survey follows.

3.2 Research Approach

Research approach that was taken refers to this research study's leading rationale and strategy. In first part of the data collection, qualitative approach was used to gather data about participants' demographics as well as their past experience or lack of, with the sex toys. In the rest of the data collection survey, a quantitative approach was taken in this research study. In order to allow for the generalisation of the results to a larger population, a survey with a sizable random sample was used to gather the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Primary data was gathered through a questionnaire from the participants.

Mixed methods research is the methodological approach that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques (Johnson et al. 2007). The thesis used a variety of methodologies, but the quantitative ones were prioritised (Morgan 1998). It was feasible to adopt a philosophical stance which differs between the qualitative and quantitative components of the research while using mixed methods. Since the focus of the thesis was on quantitative research, post-positivism as a unitary philosophical framework was adopted.

Critical realism is a branch of post-positivism that is used by mixed method researchers (Metsamuuronen 2006, Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). While adopting the positivistic view that information may be learned by objective measures, critical realism nevertheless acknowledges that because phenomena are so complex, perfect objectivity cannot be achieved (Metsämuuronen 2006, 205). It is impossible to prevent some epistemic constructivism from arising while gathering and analysing qualitative data. The interpretation of the expert interviews could overemphasise the interviewees' personal experiences. By considering the interview results as facts rather than cultural meanings, constructivism's outward manifestations can be avoided. In 2010, (Alastalo

& Kerman, 374). The researcher must maintain objectivity when gathering data, according to the post-positivist perspective (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). By conducting the survey questionnaire online, the researcher was prevented from influencing the study subjects.

These participants were given either an online link to a questionnaire asking them firstly questions about their demographic backgrounds and then their questions about their attitude towards sex toys usage in their own personal life in solo capacity, during their partnered sexual encounter and questions about the acceptance or rejection of sex toys in society or their surroundings. The questions in the questionnaire were designed to ask the participants about if they had any previous exposure to or experience of sex toys usage. Also, they were asked if they would consider using the sex toys in future if or when provided either the opportunity of using the sex toys or if it was suggested to them by their partner.

3.3 Research Design

This research had minimum interference because it was conducted in the field. The unit of measurement was the participant that took part in the questionnaire survey questions. The study was based on an online survey dataset collected in June–July 2023 using Google online form to complete the survey. There were six sections in the survey. First section was used to collect the data about the participants' demographics. The second section was used to gather data about participants' previous experience of sex toys. The remaining four sections were used to collect data about the effect of ethics, privacy, embarrassment and location on the purchase intentions of sex toys. Overall, 200 responses were collected via the main survey. Random sampling was used for the survey because the purpose was to take a cover a relevant representation which was statistically sufficient. As shown in Table 1, the sample which was taken in this study represented a variety of gender groups both male and female, also different age groups and participants from different educational backgrounds. Hence, it was seen as a proper and satisfactory enough cross-sectional representation of participants.

3.4 Goodness of Data

The evaluation of the consistency of the data collected was done through face value of the participants.

3.5 Method

3.5.1 Participants

The participants who took part in this research study were from the Northern Cyprus which is a very popular destination for international students from a vast array of countries from Asian and African continents. Most of these students are either doing their undergraduate or postgraduate studies in Northern Cyprus universities. They come from countries with different cultural as well as different social backgrounds and have varying degree of previous experiences in life.

It's important to approach this topic with sensitivity and recognize that individual interests and behaviors can vary widely across different age groups and cultures. However, there are a few factors that might contribute to the perception that lower age groups are more interested in sex toys:

Exploration and Curiosity: Younger individuals, especially those in their late teens and early twenties, are often in a phase of self-discovery and exploration. This curiosity about their own bodies and sexual preferences can lead them to be more open to trying new things, including sex toys.

Changing Attitudes: Over the past few decades, societal attitudes towards sexuality have become more open and accepting, which may encourage people of all ages to openly discuss and explore their sexual desires, including the use of sex toys.

Access to Information: The internet has made information about sex and sexual products more accessible to younger generations. They can easily access educational resources, reviews, and discussions that may influence their curiosity and interest in sex toys.

Media and Entertainment: Mainstream media and entertainment, including movies, TV shows, and online content, often portray sexual exploration as a normal part of young adulthood. This can contribute to an increased interest in various aspects of sexuality, including the use of sex toys.

Privacy and Independence: Younger individuals may be more likely to explore their sexuality in private, especially if they are living away from their families for the first time (e.g., in college or on their own). This newfound independence can lead to more experimentation.

Marketing and Accessibility: The sex toy industry has expanded significantly in recent years, with a wider variety of products available at various price points. This

increased accessibility and marketing can attract people of all ages to try out these products.

The sample included total of 200 participants. The dataset shows these age group distribution patterns: 49.5% of the sample, are 18–29. 38.0% of the sample are 30-39. 10.5% of the sample are 40–49. Finally, 2% are 50-59 years old.

These participants were selected through non-probability sampling method using convenience. This kind of sampling helps data collection and would yield findings which approximate the opinions and views of a general population. Participants in the study expressed their views on the sex toys usage in the society in general and in their personal capacity in particular. It is stated by Sekaran (2000) that a good and sufficient sample size would normally be at least ten times the variables used in the multivariate research study. There are other researchers who state that a normal sample size of between 30 and 500 is sufficient for a research study (Roscoe, 1975).

3.5.2 Measures

In order to study the relationship between the variables in this study's conceptual model, a structured-questionnaire was formulated. There were 43 questions in the questionnaire, six of these questions were about the general demographics of the participants. These questions asked the participants questions including their Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Relationship Status, Education Level and any Religious Affiliation. The purpose of these questions was to gather the demographic data which was required to see the demographic backgrounds of the participants. The next 8 questions were about the participants' previous experience or lack of towards buying or using the sex toys either in the past. These questions were structured in a way that was meant to gather the data about different aspects of their attitude towards sex toys usage. Firstly, it was sought from the participants how they felt about the prevalence of sex toys in society in general, whether they felt fine with these products irrespective of their personal like or dislike for that matter of the sex toys. Secondly, the participants were asked to say if they had a personal experience in the past or any future intention of using the sex toys in a solo capacity or if their partner suggested to do so, what would be their reaction. The following four sections were designed to collect data based on the four independent variables, Privacy, Location and Ethics. There were 7 questions in each of these sections.

The participants were provided with options to make their level of agreement or otherwise on a Likert Scale of 5 with 1 showing Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree. Participants in were provided a link (<https://forms.gle/aTG9YYAAeuw8og6d6>) for the questionnaire. These links were either shared through WhatsApp, email or a QR code was presented to them to scan which took them direct to the questionnaire. A total of 294 people were asked to participate with 200 responses resulting in 68% response rate. This response rate further provided support to our initial assumption that people tend not to discuss their personal issues like sexual behavior in this case. Multiple choice questions were used to find out people's thoughts, behavior, and likely usage or otherwise of the toys. A sample Questionnaire has been prepared and attached in Appendix A. Once the links for the questionnaire were opened through Google Forms, participants were taken to the Google Forms where the participants were provided with information sheet which included the consent form for the participants. Only people who were happy to proceed were asked to complete the questionnaire. At the same time, all these participants were assured of complete anonymity with no personal details asked in the questionnaires apart from general demographic information like, sex, age group, education and whether the participant considered him/herself part of a particular religion with no mention of the religion name itself. A sample of 207 participants was collected for the study.

3.5.3 Design

This field study was conducted in natural setup and used a survey questionnaire. So, there was not much scope of meddling with the relevant variables. In order to make the study cross-sectional, participants' sample in the Northern Cyprus was approached independently one at a time and earlier mentioned questionnaire was provided to the participants.

The reason to use participants from the TRNC was because TRNC is a place where mostly students from many different countries come to study. These students have vast differences in their cultural backgrounds, educational levels, varying degrees of societal norms in their home countries and different levels of personal freedom when it comes to sexual preferences and women's right to decide their own way of lives. It was the intention to collect data from these participants so that data collected would be collected from participants from many different backgrounds.

3.5.4 Data Analysis Plan

IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used to analyse the data that was collected in this study. Descriptive statistics were drawn, reliability assessment was done to evaluate the research questions and hypothesis. A questionnaire was used to collect the responses of the participants about their intentions to buy sex toys was used and examined.

3.6 Ethics

Ethical approval with reference NEU/SS/2022/1284 as shown in Appendix B was granted. All the participants who took part in this study were given a consent form to read and either refuse to participate at any point before, during or after completing the questionnaire without giving any reason. They were notified that their participation would be completely anonymous and were provided with contact details of the research for any further queries.

3.7 Conclusion

The method of investigation that was used in this study was described in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates how different variables affect customers' desire to buy sex toys. The research focuses on four main aspects: location, embarrassment privacy problems, and ethical considerations. Businesses in the adult sector must comprehend how these aspects impact customer behavior when buying sex toys in order to design efficient marketing plans and solve possible purchase obstacles.

The analysis was conducted based on the responses of 249 respondents. Subsequently, IBM SPSS Statistics 27 was used to analyze this data.

4.2 Realization Rate

Total of 294 links to the online questionnaires were sent to the potential participants out of which 200 participants completed the online questionnaire. The realization rate, therefore, was 68%. Table 4 shows the Realisation Rate.

Table 2: Realization Rate

	N
Questionnaires sent	294
Questionnaires completed	200
Realization rate	68%

The questionnaire included 4 sections with first section having 7 questions asking the respondents about their demographic variables. The second section with 8 questions asked the participants about their previous experience or lack of the sex toys. The following four sections, each with seven questions asked about the impact of privacy location embarrassment and ethics of the participants on their intentions to purchase sex toys. All these questions had five Likert style answers from 1 to 5. The percentage of these responses to the questions were calculated for all the questions and every participant's response was taken.

4.3 Descriptive statistics:

With 200 individuals in the dataset under consideration and no missing data, the statistical analysis may be relied upon to be reliable and valid. Key statistical

measures were used to highlight the properties of the variables and offer a thorough overview.

The primary trends in the dataset were highlighted using the mean values. While the relationship status variable shows a preference for being in a relationship (mean: 1.58), the gender variable shows a small predisposition towards men (mean: 1.53). The distribution of ages is centered in the middle (mean: 1.65), showing a wide variety of ages. The heterosexual preference component of the sexual orientation variable has a mean value of 1.40. The standard deviation numbers demonstrate the level of variability across the variables and the breadth of dispersion in the dataset. This idea is further supported by the variance numbers, which show how widely distributed the data were around the mean. With modest variances seen in certain variables, such as age group and sexual orientation, skewness values reflect the symmetry, or lack thereof, in the distributions. The form of the distributions is also represented by kurtosis values, with certain variables showing a degree of peakedness or flatness.

The standard errors of skewness and kurtosis, which provide an approximation of the accuracy of the corresponding statistics, support the dependability of the measurements. The range values capture the range of data for each variable, from lowest to maximum values.

This analytical strategy ensures a careful comprehension of the variables under inquiry by exemplifying expertise and discipline in the dataset analysis. A thorough and impartial evaluation is accomplished via the use of statistical measurements, laying the groundwork for subsequent perceptive analysis and interpretation of the data.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Statistics

	Gender	Relations hip Status	Age group	Sexual orientation	Educational background	Follow Religion	where are you from
N Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.53	1.58	1.65	1.40	2.26	.67	2.25
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
Std. Deviation	.500	.496	.749	.897	.636	.471	.661
Variance	.250	.246	.560	.804	.404	.222	.437
Skewness	-.121	-.306	.964	2.163	-.282	-.729	-.314
Std. Error of Skewness	.172	.172	.172	.172	.172	.172	.172
Kurtosis	-2.005	-1.926	.428	3.281	-.661	-1.484	-.757
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.342	.342	.342	.342	.342	.342	.342
Range	1	1	3	3	2	1	2

4.3.1 Frequency Table

Table 4: Gender Frequency

Gender		
	N	%
Male	94	47.0%
Female	106	53.0%

The gender distribution within the dataset consists of 94 male participants, accounting for 47.0% of the total sample, and 106 female participants, representing 53.0% of the sample. This demonstrates a relatively balanced gender representation, enabling a comprehensive analysis and understanding of both male and female perspectives within the dataset.

Figure 6: Gender Frequency

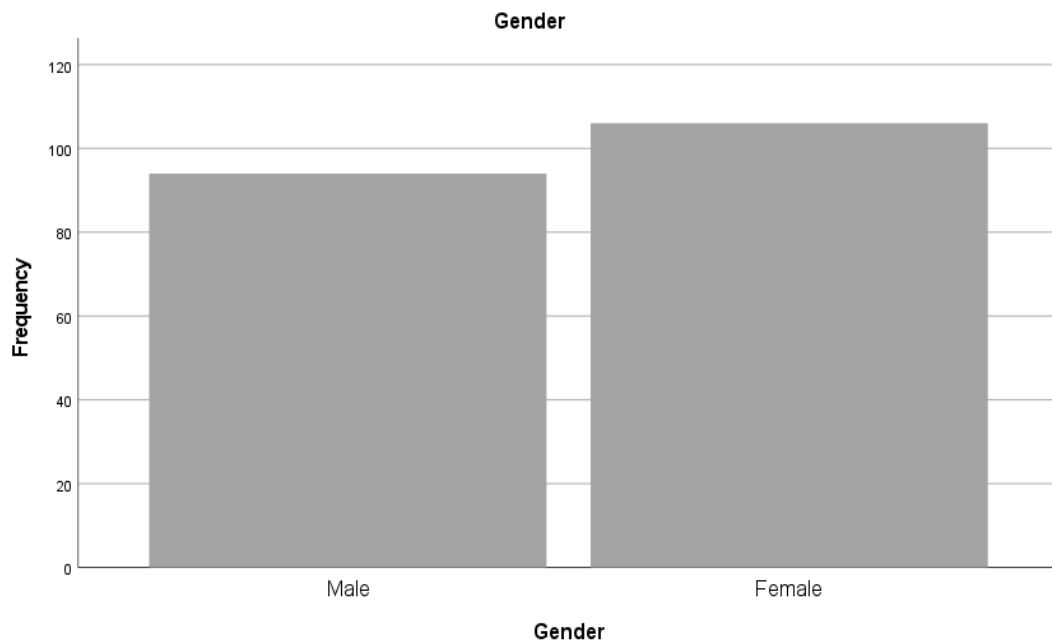


Table 5: Relationship Status Frequency

Relationship Status

	N	%
Single	85	42.5%
Partner/Spouse	115	57.5%

The relationship status distribution within the dataset reveals that 85 participants, or 42.5% of the sample, identified as single. On the other hand, 115 participants, or 57.5% of the sample, reported being in a partnership or married. This distribution provides insights into the diverse relationship statuses of the participants, enabling a comprehensive examination of the factors that may influence their perspectives and behaviors related to the research topic.

Figure 7: Relationship Status

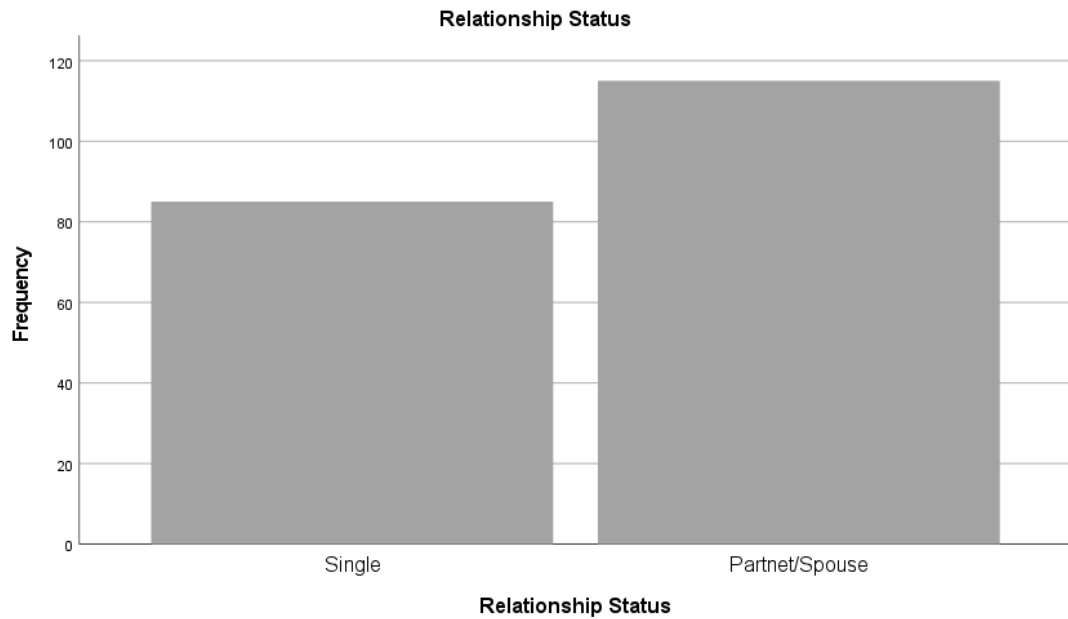


Table 6: Age Group

Age group		
	N	%
18-29	99	49.5%
30-39	76	38.0%
40-49	21	10.5%
50-59	4	2.0%

The dataset shows these age group distribution patterns: 99 individuals, 49.5% of the sample, are 18–29. 38.0% of the sample—76 people—are 30-39. 10.5% of the sample—21 people—are 40–49. Finally, just 4 individuals (2.0%) are 50-59 years old. The dataset is dominated by 18-39-year-olds. These age group proportions should be considered when evaluating and forming conclusions about the study issue.

Figure 8: Age Group

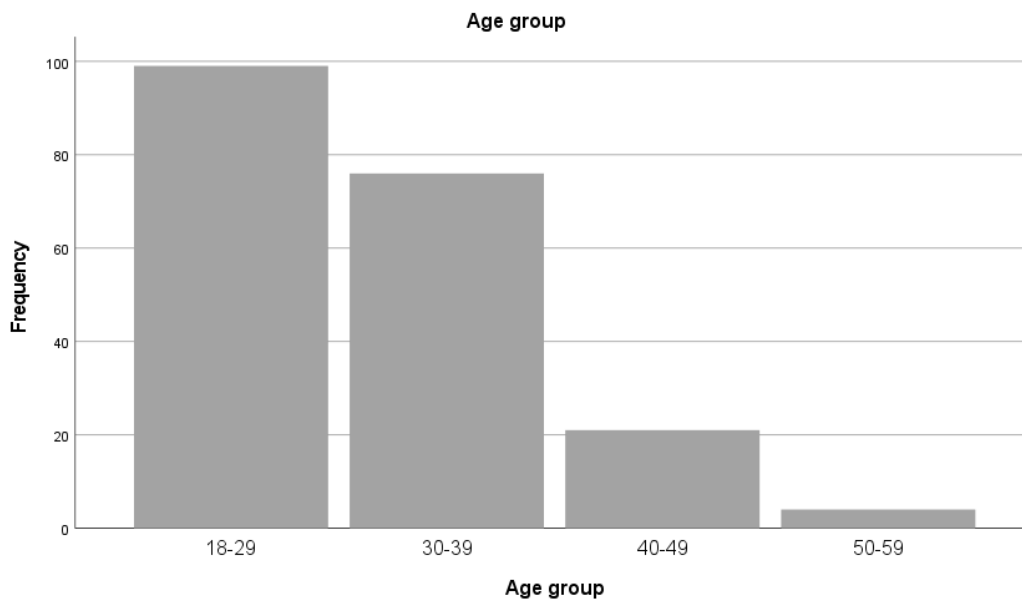


Table 7: Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation		
	N	%
Straight	160	80.0%
Same Sex	16	8.0%
Bisexual	8	4.0%
Other	16	8.0%

Dataset sexual orientation distribution: 160 participants (80.0%) are heterosexual. 16 individuals (8.0%) indicate same-sex sexual orientation. 8 participants—4% of the sample—are bisexual. 16 "other" people, 8.0% of the sample, may have various sexual orientations. This distribution shows the dataset's different sexual orientations, emphasizing the necessity for inclusiveness and diversity in research.

Figure 9: Sexual Orientation

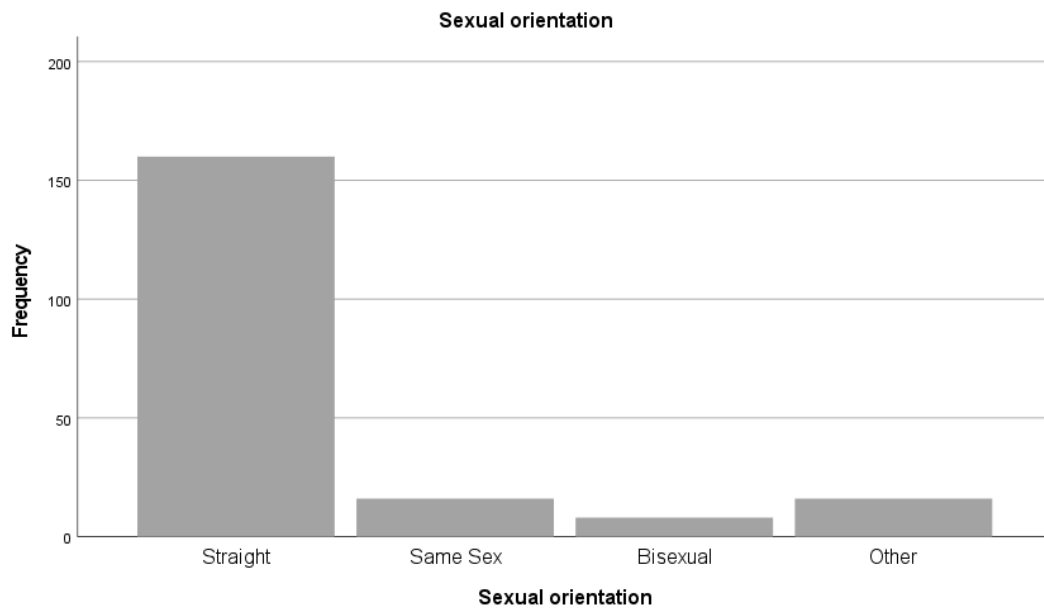


Table 8: Education Background

Educational background		
	N	%
Primary/High School	21	10.5%
Undergraduate Degree	106	53.0%
Graduate Degree and Above	73	36.5%

Dataset education distribution: 21 participants (10.5%) have elementary or high school education. 53.0% of the sample—106 people—have undergraduate degrees. 36.5% of the sample—73 people—have graduate degrees. The dataset has a wide educational background, with a considerable share having higher education. When analysing and interpreting participants' views and behaviours on the study issue, their educational background may affect their knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making.

Figure 10: Education Background

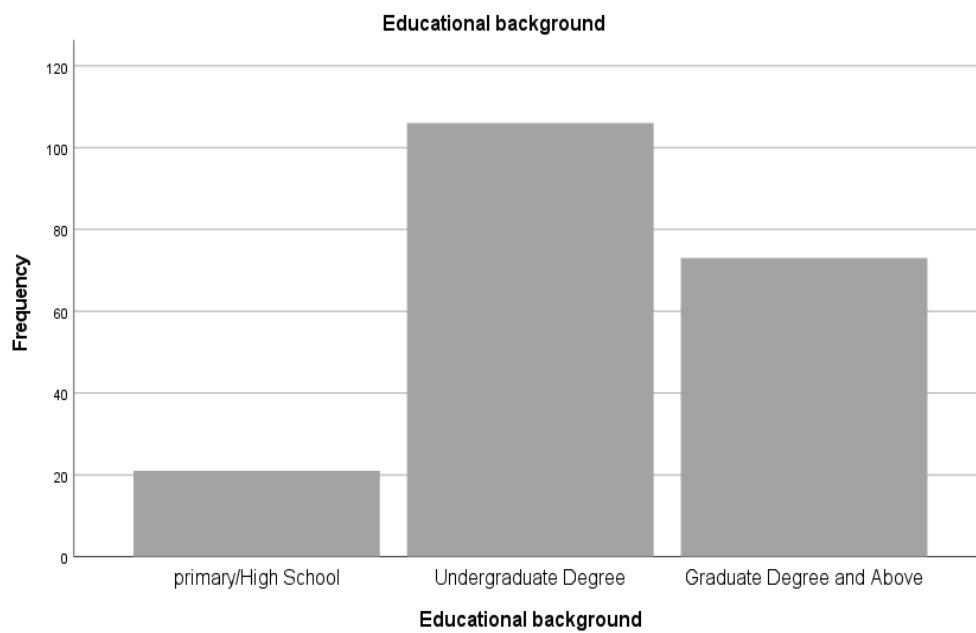


Table 9: Follow Religion

Follow Religion

	N	%
No	66	33.0%
Yes	134	67.0%

Dataset "Follow Religion" distribution: 33.0% of the sample—66 people—reported no religion. 134 participants—67.0% of the sample—reported following a religion. The dataset has a diversified religious and non-religious population. Understanding the participants' religious background might reveal their ideas, values, and possible impacts on their study issue attitudes and behaviours.

Figure 11: Follow Religion

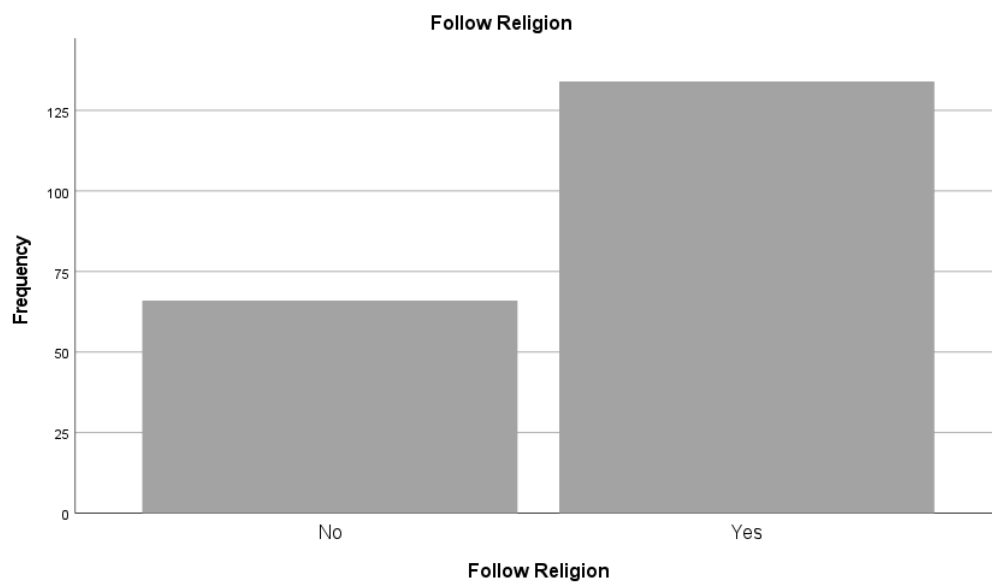
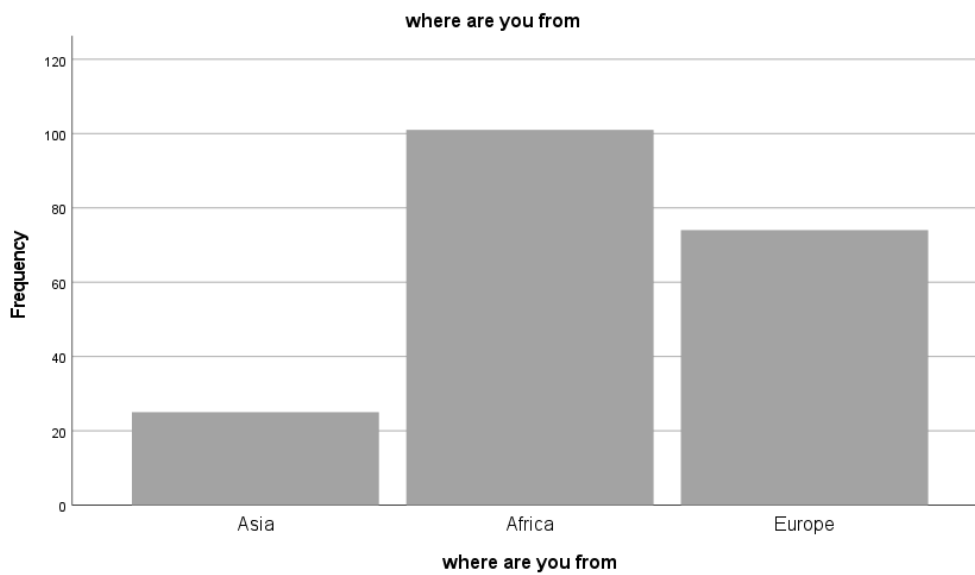


Table10: Where are you from

Where are you from		
	N	%
Asia	25	12.5%
Africa	101	50.5%
Europe	74	37.0%

The "Where are you from" distribution within the dataset showcases the following breakdown: 25 participants, accounting for 12.5% of the sample, are from Asia. A larger subset of 101 participants, representing 50.5% of the sample, are from Africa. Additionally, 74 participants, making up 37.0% of the sample, are from Europe. This distribution highlights a diverse representation of geographic origins within the dataset, with participants hailing from various regions. Considering the participants' geographic backgrounds can provide insights into potential cultural, societal, and regional influences on their perspectives and behaviors related to the research topic.

Figure 12: Where are you from



4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Hypothesis One: Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Null hypothesis (H0): Privacy concerns of consumers would not have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

4.4.1.1 Regression Analysis:

The regression model provided us p-value was 0.013 based on the results of the regression study. We can conclude that the null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value is less than the significance threshold, which is normally 0.05. Thus, there was a strong correlation between customers' privacy concerns and their inclination to buy sex toys.

In order to determine the effect magnitude, one must look at the standardised coefficient (Beta) for the predictor variable "Privacy Concerns." The standardised coefficient in this instance is 0.175, which indicates a modest effect size.

The following interpretation may be made about the link between privacy concerns and intention to buy sex toys: An improvement in the desire to buy sex toys is linked

to an increase in privacy concerns. It's crucial to keep in mind that the impact size is moderate, meaning that privacy concerns only account for a little amount of the variation in purchase intention.

In conclusion, the findings show a substantial link, with a modest impact size and a positive direction, between privacy concerns and purchase intention for sex toys.

Figure 13: Privacy Concerns

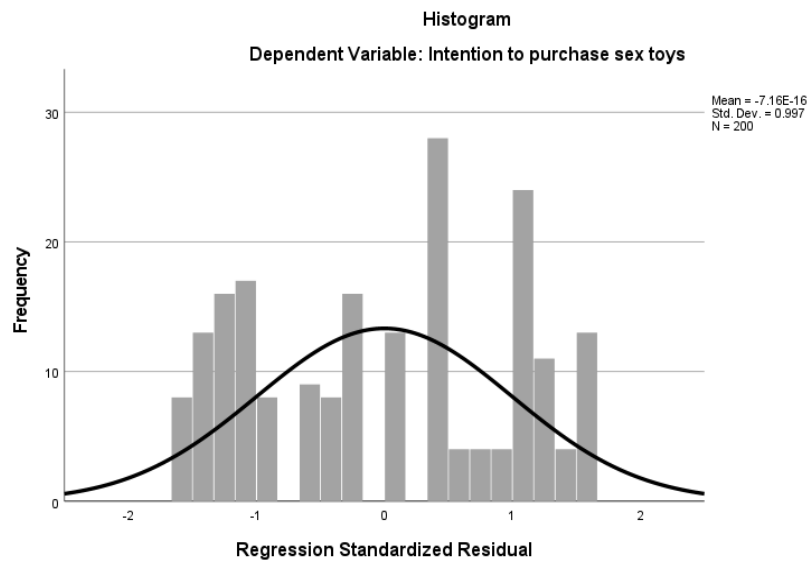


Table 11: Privacy Concerns Descriptives

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intention to purchase sex toys	1.537857142857143	.386460685384107	200
Privace Concerns	3.429693877551020	.956197765984117	200

Table 12: Privacy Concerns Correlations

		Intention to purchase sex toys	Privacy Concerns
Pearson Correlation	Intention to purchase sex toys	1.000	.175
	Privacy Concerns	.175	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Intention to purchase sex toys	.	.007
	Privacy Concerns	.007	.
N	Intention to purchase sex toys	200	200
	Privacy Concerns	200	200

Table 13: Privacy Concerns Model Summary

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.175 ^a	.031	.026	.3814674 8142997 7	.031	6.244	1	198	.013

a. Predictors: (Constant), Privacy Concerns

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 14: Privacy Concerns Coefficients

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.295	.101		12.868	.000
	Privace Concerns	.071	.028	.175	2.499	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 15: Privacy Concerns Residual Statistics

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.377699971 199036	1.648822784 423828	1.537857142 857144	.0675697075 10370	200
Residual	- .5781578421 59271	.6276021599 76959	.0000000000 00000	.3805078132 89710	200
Std. Predicted Value	-2.370	1.642	.000	1.000	200
Std. Residual	-1.516	1.645	.000	.997	200

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

4.4.2 Hypothesis Two: Location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Null hypothesis (H0): The location of consumers would not have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): The location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

4.4.2.1 Regression Analysis:

The p value shows the regression model is 0.000 based on the findings of the regression analysis. We can conclude that out the null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value is less than the significance threshold, which is normally 0.05. As a result, there is a considerable correlation between customer geography and sex toy purchase intention.

In order to determine the effect magnitude, one must look at the standardized coefficient (Beta) 64how64he predictor variable “Location.” The standardized coefficient in this instance is -0.367, which indicates a modest effect size. The intensity of the association between customers’ location and their desire to buy sex toys may be understood as follows: a greater location value is linked to a lower intention to buy sex toys. In other words, compared to consumers in other locations, customers in certain places may have lower purchase intentions for sex toys.

In conclusion, the findings 64how a substantial link, with a moderate effect size and a negative direction, between customer location and their propensity to buy sex toys.

Figure 14: Location

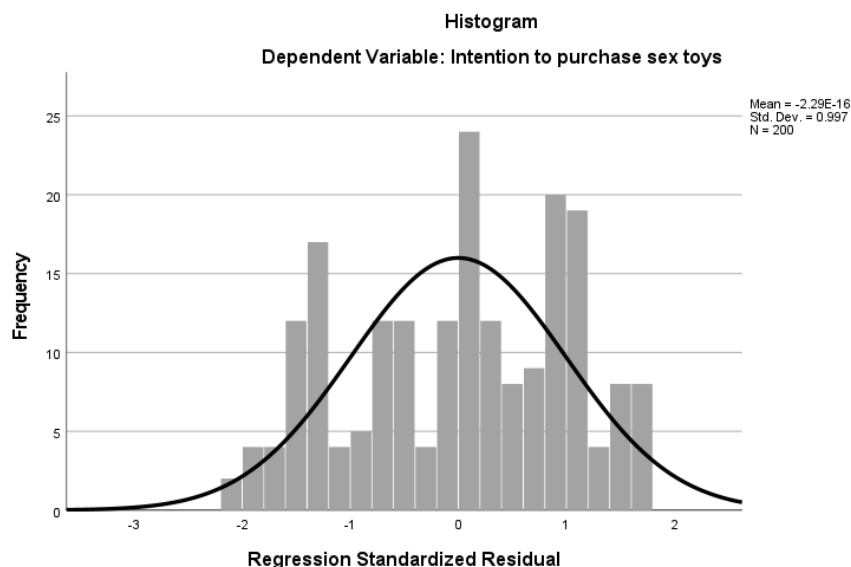


Table 16: Location Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intention to purchase sex toys	1.537857142857143	.3864606853	200
Locatiuon	2.987303206997084	1.049227290514433	200

Table 17: Location Correlations

		Intention to purchase sex toys	Locatiuon
Pearson Correlation	Intention to purchase sex toys	1.000	-.367
	Locatiuon	-.367	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Intention to purchase sex toys	.	.000
	Locatiuon	.000	.
N	Intention to purchase sex toys	200	200
	Locatiuon	200	200

Table 18: Location Model Summary

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.367 ^a	.134	.130	.360458077904116	.134	30.746	1	198	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Locatiuon

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 19: Location Coefficients

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	1.941	.077		25.183	.000
	Locatiuon	-.135	.024	-.367	-5.545	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 20: Location Residuals Statistics

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.304649114 608765	1.806218266 487122	1.537857142 857143	.1416853913 58370	200
Residual	- .7373214364 05182	.5988952517 50946	.0000000000 00000	.3595512636 92930	200
Std. Predicted Value	-1.646	1.894	.000	1.000	200
Std. Residual	-2.046	1.661	.000	.997	200

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

4.4.3 Hypothesis Three: Embarrassment felt by consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Null hypothesis (H₀): Embarrassment felt by consumers has no effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Alternative hypothesis (H_A): Embarrassment felt by consumers has an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys

4.4.3.1 Regression Analysis:

Embarrassment and desire to buy sex toys have a moderately positive correlation value of 0.394, which shows a link between the two factors. This shows that customers' intentions to buy sex toys tend to grow along with their feeling of humiliation.

Embarrassment substantially predicts the propensity to buy sex toys, according to the regression analysis ($p < 0.001$). The standardised coefficient (beta) of embarrassment is 0.394, meaning that the desire to buy sex toys is affected by 0.394 units for every one unit rise in humiliation. The regression model's impact size (R-square) is 0.155, which indicates that humiliation may account for 15.5% of the variation in consumers' intentions to buy sex toys.

We reject the null hypothesis (H₀) that consumer humiliation has no impact on their propensity to buy sex devices in light of these results. The evidence supports the alternative hypothesis (H_A), which contends that humiliation does influence a person's decision to buy sex toys. Higher feelings of humiliation are linked consumers intentions to buy sex toys, according to the somewhat association between embarrassment and intention to buy.

Figure 15: Embarrassment

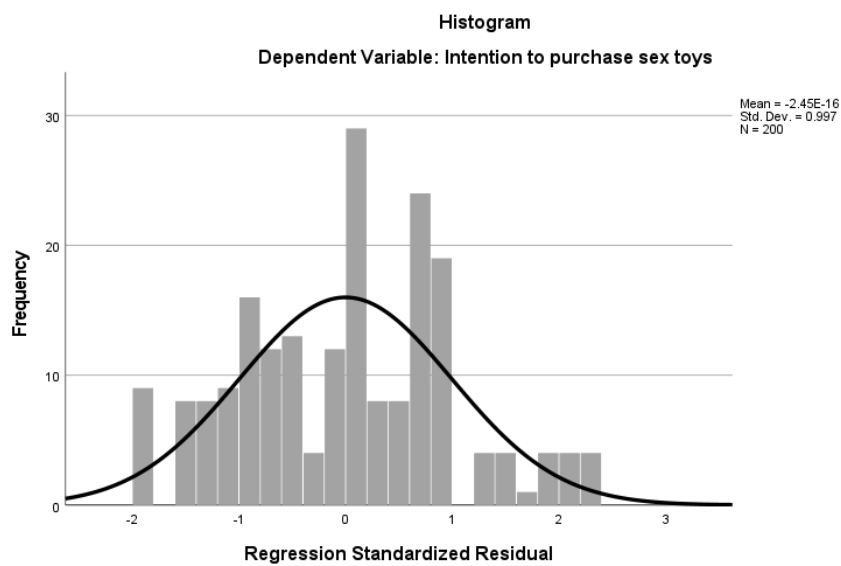


Table 21: Embarrassment Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intention to purchase sex toys	1.537857142857143	.386460685384107	200
Embarrassment	2.915999583506873	1.297927291720768	200

Table 22: Embarrassment Correlations

Correlations

		Intention to purchase sex toys	Embarrassment
Pearson Correlation	Intention to purchase sex toys	1.000	.394
	Embarrassment	.394	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Intention to purchase sex toys	.	.000
	Embarrassment	.000	.
N	Intention to purchase sex toys	200	200
	Embarrassment	200	200

Table 23: Embarrassment Model Summary

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.394 ^a	.155	.151	.356061046079024	.155	36.431	1	198	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Embarrassment

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 24: Embarrassment Coefficients

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.196	.062		19.270	.000
	Embarrassment	.117	.019	.394	6.036	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 25: Embarrassment Residuals Statistics

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.318829655 647278	1.782470464 706421	1.537857142 857142	.1523465640 21388	200
Residual	- .6650936603 54614	.7952686548 23303	.0000000000 00000	.3551652936 00645	200
Std. Predicted Value	-1.438	1.606	.000	1.000	200
Std. Residual	-1.868	2.234	.000	.997	200

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

4.4.4 Hypothesis Four: Ethical concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys. Make a null and alternative

Null hypothesis (H₀): Ethical concerns of consumers have no effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Alternative hypothesis (HA): Ethical concerns of consumers have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

4.4.4.1 Regression Analysis:

Intention to buy sex toys and ethics have a 0.356 correlation value, which indicates a somewhat good association between the two factors. This shows that customers' intentions to buy sex toys tend to grow along with their degree of ethical concerns. Regression study reveals that ethics substantially ($p < 0.001$) predicts the propensity to buy sex toys. The standardised coefficient (beta) of ethics is 0.356, meaning that there is an increase of 0.356 units in the desire to buy sex toys for every unit rise in ethical concerns.

The regression model's impact size (R-square) is 0.126, which indicates that ethics may account for 12.6% of the variation in consumers' intentions to buy sex toys. These results lead us to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that consumer ethical concerns have no impact on their desire to buy sex toys. The alternative hypothesis (HA) is confirmed, indicating that ethical considerations indeed influence a consumer's decision to buy sex toys. Higher degrees of ethical concerns are linked to a stronger propensity to buy sex toys, according to the somewhat positive association between ethical concerns and purchasing intent.

Figure 16: Ethics

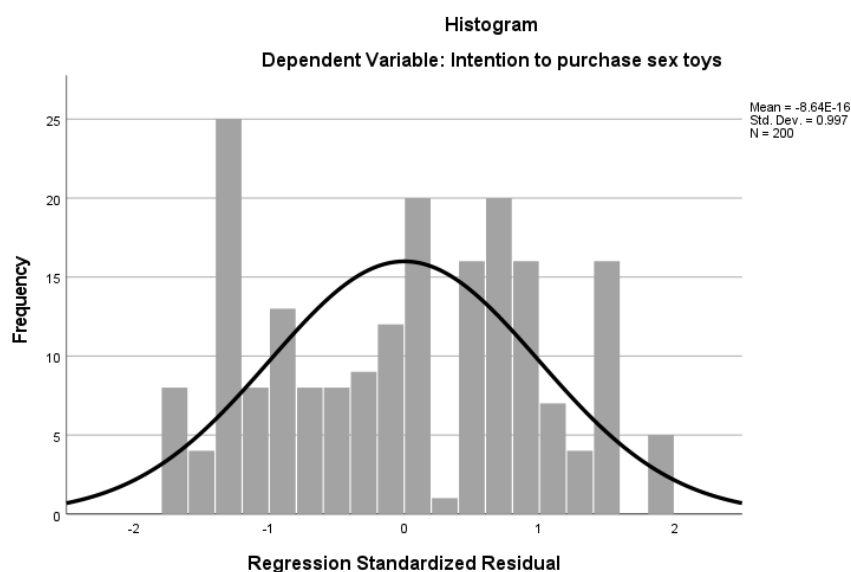


Table 26: Ethics Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intention to purchase sex toys	1.537857142857143	.386460685384107	200
Ethics	3.369407687273159	1.132545836273787	200

Table 27: Ethics Correlations

		Intention to purchase sex toys	Ethics
Pearson Correlation	Intention to purchase sex toys	1.000	.356
	Ethics	.356	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Intention to purchase sex toys	.	.000
	Ethics	.000	.
N	Intention to purchase sex toys	200	200
	Ethics	200	200

Table 28: Ethics Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.356 ^a	.126	.122	.36210	.126	28.672	1	198	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethics

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 29: Ethics Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.129	.081		14.016	.000
	Ethics	.121	.023	.356	5.355	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

Table 30: Ethics Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.257235288 619995	1.735747575 759888	1.537857142 857144	.1374470080 85328	200
Residual	- .6143864989 28070	.6839864850 04425	.0000000000 00000	.3611927204 63666	200
Std. Predicted Value	-2.042	1.440	.000	1.000	200
Std. Residual	-1.697	1.889	.000	.997	200

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to purchase sex toys

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter depicted the findings of the data collected and analysed. It reported on the realisation rate, participants' demographics and how these demographics, if any, affected their attitude towards the sex toys usage.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, keeping in the focus the primary goal as well as findings of this study, a discussion is carried out. It begins with a summary of the findings and then moves on to analysis of the main findings of the study. All the hypotheses are reviewed and subsequently discussed and it is determined if the goals of the study were achieved. The limitations of the study are detailed which are then followed by suggestions for related future studies on the subject.

5.2 Main Points Reviewed from Related Literature

Consumer behavior regarding buying sex toys has not been studied in detail in the past (Gould, 1995). The apparent reason seemed to be the embarrassment people felt while discussing about the usage of sex toys and fear of attracting harmful and negative attention from others (Robbins & Parlavecchio, 2006; Gilbert, 1997, Sznycer, 2016). Sex and any related activity are considered very private and intimate matters of people's personal lives and talking about them, discussing it with other than their immediate partners or family has not been a norm for most people. It could be said that it is one of the taboos of the society which is not talked about in detail more often. There are groups of some people who try to go against the social norms and like to break these kinds of taboos. Using sex toys could be classed as one of these acts.

In all societies, boundaries of many aspects where it was unthinkable earlier, do shift with the passage of time' (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, and Lerner, 2000). In other words, once forbidden, classed as a crime, could become a social norm one day. This has been the case with the same-sex people. These kinds of relationships were outlawed in most countries during the first part of the 20th century but there has been a gradual change and acceptance of this kind of sexual orientation in many countries around the world. Similarly, people think of sex toys as somewhat of less taboo nature to a certain degree at least that is the case in some Western societies (Pellandini-Simanyi, 2014). These changes could occur because of different reasons or routes, some practices and values are co-evolving in some societies, for example, liberalization, it could be because a new group of people or a new generation and it can result in this kind of gradual change. New technologies might also cause some changes that would consumers' consumption habits, for example online sex toy shops.

Also, intellectuals and some institutions might work like a change agent, for example, sex educators as well as artists.

Covid pandemic disturbed peoples' general way of life as well as their private. It felt funny when when some governments in different countries asked their people to try new sexual positions, avoid kissing so that people would have less face-to-face contact. Some were advised to wear a mask while having sex. They were advised to use condoms. (Eleuteri, 2022). But this was the pandemic and nothing was of limits apparently. With these issues, more people were lured to using the sex toys for their sexual pleasure.

In the research study 'From filthy to healthy and beyond: finding the boundaries of taboo destruction in sex toy buying' (Sandberg & Jarvinen, Hurmerinta, 2018), researchers studied through a consumer survey using the theory of consumers' planned behaviour (Ryan & Bonfield, 1975, Ajzen, 2008) using their conceptual framework (Tonglet, 2002, Richard & Meuli, 2013). In that study, researchers studied how consumers attitude, subjective norms as well as perceived behavioural control affected their purchasing intention of sex toys. Attitudes was concerned to a consumer's beliefs while thinking about outcome that was possible as a result of purchasing sex toys. The study results showed that embarrassment related to sex toys was not as much it used to be because of the liberalization of typical Western society (Christensen & Gregg, 1970) but this study was only conducted in Finland which has comparatively more feminist society than other countries in the west, thus it was limited in scope.

5.3 Main Findings

Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

The location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

Embarrassment felt by consumers has an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys

Ethical concerns of consumers have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

5.4 Research Hypothesis

As a result of the findings of this study, the hypotheses that were set out earlier can be answered as follows:

5.4.1 Privacy concerns of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

The findings show a substantial link, with a modest impact size and a positive direction, between privacy concerns and purchase intention for sex toys.

5.4.2 The location of consumers would have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

In conclusion, the findings show a substantial link, with a moderate effect size and a negative direction, between customer location and their propensity to buy sex toys.

5.4.3 Embarrassment felt by consumers has an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys

The evidence supports the alternative hypothesis (HA), which contends that humiliation does influence a person's decision to buy sex toys. Higher feelings of humiliation are linked to a stronger propensity to buy sex toys, according to the somewhat positive association between embarrassment and intention to buy.

5.4.4 Ethical concerns of consumers have an effect on purchase intention towards sex toys.

It was confirmed, indicating that ethical considerations indeed influence a consumer's decision to buy sex toys. Higher degrees of ethical concerns are linked to a stronger propensity to buy sex toys, according to the somewhat positive association between ethical concerns and purchasing intent.

5.5 Discussion

This study's main concern was to if how consumers' intention to purchase sex toys were affected by privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics. The motivation behind this research study was the taboo nature of sex toys and consumers behavior regarding sex toys has not been in great detail in the past because of the embarrassment

people felt when discussing about their very private and intimate aspects of their life as sex and sex related activities are considered very personal, private and intimate. Talking about them or discussing these aspects of private life could attract negative attention from others and potentially cause emotional distress.

There was some research done on sex toys usage and the focus of some of these articles appeared to be from feminism point of view and how sex toys usage was increasing along with the feminism concept and how sex toys have been helping in empowering women in taking their pleasure in their own hands. Other articles' focus was on different types of sex toys which are available in the market. Peoples' attitudes towards sex toys seemed to be slowly evolving across the globe and these consumers concerns about privacy, their location, sense of embarrassment and ethical concerns appeared to be some of the factors in this change of attitude towards sex toys usage. This change was more visible in developed countries with more personal freedom and more liberal norms. The secular mindset and liberalization in western society could be classed a major cause in changing peoples' attitude towards sex toy usage relatively. But when people's attitude in this regard in less developed countries or countries where certain religions are dominant is considered, the factors affecting this could be personal freedom felt by the people especially women in certain countries or societies, education background, cultural norms, religious beliefs and lack of awareness about their impact on sexual wellness.

This study's findings depicted that consumers' intention of purchasing sex toys are affected by privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics and all these concerns do have an effect on their intention towards buy or using sex toys. Majority of the participants were females when gender was considered. Age wise, it was mostly participants who were of younger generation from 18 to 30 years old who mostly completed the questionnaires because most of them were students in the TRNC.

While analysing the relationship between customers' privacy concerns and their inclination to buy sex toys, the results showed that there was a correlation between the two. In simpler terms, the study found that people have more concerns about their privacy when they express a desire to buy sex toys. However, it's important to note that privacy concerns explain only a small portion of the variation in purchase intention. The findings indicate a positive relationship between privacy concerns and

the intention to buy sex toys. The relationship between consumers' privacy concerns and their intention to purchase sex toys can be weak for several reasons:

Stigma and taboo: Sex toys are often associated with societal stigma and taboo. People may be hesitant to openly discuss or disclose their interest in purchasing sex toys due to fear of judgment or embarrassment. This can lead to a disconnect between their actual concerns about privacy and their expressed intentions.

Anonymity: Many consumers prefer to purchase sex toys online to maintain anonymity. Online retailers often have privacy measures in place, such as discreet packaging and secure payment options, which can alleviate privacy concerns. Therefore, consumers may not perceive significant privacy risks when buying sex toys online, leading to a weaker relationship between privacy concerns and purchase intentions.

Trust in retailers: Established retailers that specialize in adult products often invest in building trust with their customers. They may have privacy policies, secure websites, and customer reviews that contribute to consumers feeling more confident about their privacy when shopping for sex toys. This trust can mitigate privacy concerns and make the relationship weaker.

Privacy vs. intimacy: Some consumers may prioritize the intimacy and pleasure they derive from using sex toys over privacy concerns. They might be willing to accept some level of privacy risk in exchange for the benefits they expect to gain from the product. In such cases, the desire for the product may outweigh privacy concerns.

Selective disclosure: Consumers may choose to share information about their sex toy purchases selectively. They might be more comfortable discussing their intentions with close friends or in online communities where they feel a sense of anonymity and belonging. This selective disclosure can mask their overall privacy concerns.

Varied individual factors: People's attitudes and behaviors regarding privacy are influenced by individual factors such as personality, cultural background, and past experiences. Some individuals may have stronger privacy concerns than others, which can lead to a weak overall relationship when looking at a broad consumer base.

Research limiting factors: The perceived relationship between privacy concerns and purchase intentions may also be influenced by how the research was conducted.

Survey questions, the wording used, and the context in which questions are asked could have impact on the results.

Location was also another factor affecting consumers' intentions of purchasing sex toys. The participants showed in the questionnaire responses that their location affected their intention to purchase sex toys. This location factor could be a cause of non-availability of sex toys in their area or more restrictions felt by the participants due to societal pressure due to location. The relationship between consumers' location and their intention to purchase sex toys can be weak for several reasons:

Online availability: In today's digital age, sex toys are readily available for purchase online, and they can be shipped discreetly to almost any location. This means that regardless of a consumer's geographical location, they can access a wide range of sex toys without needing to visit a physical store. The ease of online shopping has reduced the impact of location on purchase intentions.

Discreet packaging: Many online retailers, especially those specializing in adult products, offer discreet packaging, which ensures that the contents of the package are not identifiable. This feature addresses concerns about privacy and discretion, making it less relevant where a consumer lives.

Reduced social stigma: While societal attitudes toward sex toys may still vary by location, there has been a gradual reduction in the stigma associated with these products in many regions. This shift in attitudes means that individuals may feel more comfortable purchasing sex toys regardless of their location.

Cultural and legal factors: In some places, cultural and legal factors can influence the availability and acceptance of sex toys. However, these factors may not always directly correlate with purchase intentions. Some individuals may choose to purchase sex toys regardless of legal restrictions or cultural norms.

Online communities: Consumers interested in purchasing sex toys often find support and information through online communities, which can transcend geographical boundaries. These communities provide a platform for sharing experiences, recommendations, and advice, making location less influential in shaping purchase intentions.

Product variety: Online retailers typically offer a wide variety of sex toys to cater to diverse preferences and needs. This extensive product range can appeal to consumers regardless of their location, as they can find products that align with their preferences and desires.

Delivery options: Couriers and shipping services have expanded their reach, making it possible to deliver products to remote or less-accessible areas. This ensures that even consumers in rural or less densely populated locations have access to the products they want.

Private shopping experience: The online shopping experience for sex toys is private and discreet, reducing the impact of social judgment or embarrassment that might be more significant in small, tight-knit communities.

Consumer discretion: People's purchase intentions for sex toys are often influenced by their personal preferences and desires. These individual factors can outweigh the influence of location, as individuals prioritize their own needs and desires.

Embarrassment felt by the consumers while thinking of purchasing sex toys was also a factor in this study. The study revealed that while expressing their intention or lack of it was connected to a sense of embarrassment felt by the participants in the study. The relationship between consumers' embarrassment and their intention to purchase sex toys can be weak for several reasons:

Online shopping: The advent of e-commerce and the availability of discreet online shopping have significantly reduced the embarrassment factor associated with purchasing sex toys. Consumers can browse and order products from the comfort and privacy of their own homes, minimizing the potential for embarrassment.

Anonymity: Online retailers often offer anonymity in the form of discreet billing and packaging. Customers can make purchases without anyone knowing the nature of their order, further reducing embarrassment.

Privacy concerns: While some consumers may feel embarrassed about purchasing sex toys, they might also prioritize their privacy and discretion. This can override feelings of embarrassment and motivate them to make the purchase, especially if they believe their privacy will be protected.

Social acceptance: Over time, societal attitudes towards sex toys have become more accepting and open. As conversations about sexual health and well-being become less taboo, consumers may feel less embarrassed about their intentions to purchase these products.

Knowledge and education: Consumers who are well-informed about the benefits of sexual health products and their impact on intimacy may be less likely to

feel embarrassed. Education can help normalize the use of sex toys and reduce embarrassment associated with their purchase.

Peer support and recommendations: Many consumers seek advice and recommendations from friends, online communities, or reviews when purchasing sex toys. This external validation and support can alleviate feelings of embarrassment, as consumers know they are making choices based on others' experiences.

Personal priorities: For many consumers, the desire for pleasure, sexual satisfaction, or addressing specific health concerns may outweigh any potential embarrassment associated with buying sex toys. People prioritize their own needs and desires over concerns about what others might think.

Discreet shopping Experiences: Physical stores that sell adult products often provide a discreet and non-judgmental shopping experience, which can minimize embarrassment. Store staff are typically trained to be respectful and discreet, creating a more comfortable environment for customers.

Age and generation: Younger generations, in particular, tend to be more open and accepting of sexual topics and products. They may experience less embarrassment when it comes to discussing or purchasing sex toys compared to older generations.

Individual variation: People have different comfort levels with their own sexuality and discussing it with others. Individual differences in personality, self-confidence, and cultural background can significantly impact feelings of embarrassment and, consequently, the intention to purchase sex toys.

Ethics was mentioned in the survey questionnaire and participants showed in their responses that sense of being ethical was also linked to their intention to buy sex toys. This sense was related to either not purchasing the sex toys because of their own personal ethical values or the ethical practices used by the businesses selling those sex toys. The relationship between consumers' ethics and their intention to purchase sex toys can be weak for several reasons:

Personal values and priorities: Ethics and morality are highly individual and subjective. What one person considers ethical, another may not. Consumers have a wide range of values and priorities, and for some, the use of sex toys may not conflict with their personal ethical beliefs.

Privacy and autonomy: Many individuals view the use of sex toys as a matter of personal privacy and autonomy. They believe that consenting adults have the right

to make decisions about their own sexual health and well-being, and this perspective often aligns with their ethical principles.

Cultural acceptance: In some cultures, the use of sex toys is widely accepted and integrated into sexual practices. In such contexts, there may be little ethical conflict associated with purchasing these products.

Separation of personal and ethical beliefs: Some consumers are capable of separating their personal beliefs and values from their consumer choices. They may engage in activities or purchases that are personally satisfying but do not align with their broader ethical framework.

Ethical dilemma resolution: Individuals who have ethical concerns about sex toys may seek to resolve any potential dilemmas by choosing products from ethical and responsible manufacturers. They may look for companies that prioritize fair labor practices, use body-safe materials, and prioritize sustainability and responsible manufacturing.

Lack of consensus: There is no universal ethical stance on the use of sex toys. Ethical perspectives vary widely, and there is no one-size-fits-all ethical framework that applies to all consumers.

Privacy and discretion: Consumers often view their purchase and use of sex toys as a private matter that does not necessarily need to be disclosed to others. This privacy can diminish the impact of ethical concerns on their purchase intentions.

Limited alternatives: For some individuals, sex toys may be the only or the most effective means of addressing specific sexual health or satisfaction issues. In such cases, the perceived benefits of using these products may outweigh any ethical reservations.

Ethical evolution: Ethical perspectives can change over time. As societal attitudes and norms evolve, what was once considered unethical or taboo may become more acceptable. This can lead to a weakened relationship between ethics and purchase intentions.

Focus on personal well-being: Some consumers prioritize their own physical and emotional well-being above ethical considerations. If they believe that using sex toys contributes positively to their sexual health and satisfaction, they may be more inclined to make the purchase.

5.7 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study and the findings of this study were discussed in this chapter to see if the research questions mentioned in the earlier section were answered.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion And Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this research study was to see how consumers location, their sense of privacy, embarrassment and their ethics affected their intentions of purchasing sex toys. A survey of questionnaire was used to find this effect if there was any. The main conclusion depicted of this study was that consumers' intention to purchase sex toys are affected by privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics and all these concerns do have an effect on their intention towards buy or using sex toys. Majority of the participants were females when gender was considered. Age wise, it was mostly participants who were of younger generation from 18 to 30 years old who mostly completed the questionnaires because most of them were students in the TRNC.

While analysing the relationship between customers' privacy concerns and their inclination to buy sex toys, the results showed that there was a strong correlation between the two. In simpler terms, the study found that people have more concerns about their privacy when they express a desire to buy sex toys. However, it's important to note that privacy concerns explain only a small portion of the variation in purchase intention. The findings indicate a positive relationship between privacy concerns and the intention to buy sex toys. The weak relationship between consumers' privacy concerns and their intention to purchase sex toys is influenced by a complex interplay of social factors, trust in retailers, personal preferences, and research methodologies. It's essential to consider these factors when studying consumer behaviour in this context.

Location was also another factor affecting consumers' intentions of purchasing sex toys. The participants showed in the questionnaire responses that their location affected their intention to purchase sex toys. This location factor could be a cause of non-availability of sex toys in their area or more restrictions felt by the participants due to societal pressure due to location. The weak relationship between consumers' location and their intention to purchase sex toys is primarily due to the accessibility and discretion provided by online shopping, reduced social stigma, and the availability of information and support through online communities. While cultural and legal factors may still play a role, they are not the sole determinants of purchase intentions in today's interconnected world.

Embarrassment felt by the consumers while thinking of purchasing sex toys was also a factor in this study. The study revealed that while expressing their intention or lack of it was connected to a sense of embarrassment felt by the participants in the study. The weak relationship between consumers' embarrassment and their intention to purchase sex toys can be attributed to various factors, including the availability of discreet online shopping, changing societal attitudes, peer support, and individual preferences. These factors collectively contribute to a more relaxed and accepting environment surrounding the purchase of sex toys, reducing the impact of embarrassment.

Ethics was mentioned in the survey questionnaire and participants showed in their responses that a sense of being ethical was also linked to their intention to buy sex toys. This sense was related to either not purchasing the sex toys because of their own personal ethical values or the ethical practices used by the businesses selling those sex toys. The weak relationship between consumers' ethics and their intention to purchase sex toys can be attributed to the highly individual and subjective nature of ethical beliefs, the autonomy and privacy associated with sexual choices, and the diversity of cultural and societal perspectives on the use of sex toys. These factors collectively contribute to a limited impact of ethics on purchase intentions in this context.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

Consumer behaviour and their intention to purchase sex toys are the areas which are affected by the theoretical implications of this study. This study opens up the debate on this taboo topic of sex toys usage which is a very intimate and personal part of people's lives.

On the whole, current study helps to extend related research literature on consumer behaviour whereby deepening the way we understand consumers' sex toys purchasing behaviour, which is a topic that is managerially contemporary. Explaining in more broad terms, this study explores and thus adds contribution to research on the topic of taboo consumption by investigating the consumer attitudes as well as their buying intentions of the products that might have been subject to taboo destruction and liberalisation in different societies. This study would be a positive step by helping to understand, the factors including privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics that

might affect the consumers intentions of purchasing sex toys and businesses dealing with these kinds of products.

Taboo markets and any related taboo products are normally defined such a way that where either governments or societies usually direct the these taboo products are either accepted with restrictions or rejected altogether. At the same time, these restrictions can also arise from persoanl experiences or lack of them. This study makes a contribution to the existing literature by trying to offer the cultural and demographic characteristics as well as consumers own sense of privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics which might affect the intention to purchase of sex toys. The perspective developed in this study seeks any reasons for the differences in the perception of sex toys from the point of view of particiapnts with different cultural and demographic backgrounds. This is derived from the relationships between the participants societal, personal or any other demographic traits and values. The socio-political literature was borrowed to explain the concepts of the taboo markets, sex toys in particular and how the perception of consumers depending on their sence of privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics affect their choice of purchasing the sex toys. The participants might accept, reject or accept conditionally depending wether it was referred by the other party and that would consequently the consumers buying or shopping behaviour for these products.

This study would help to understand how consumers negotiate their own experience of choice freedom, freedom in deciding what to shop, pay, wear or use any products for their intimate use. As was clear from the findings, these four factors play an important part in consuers minds while thinking about purchasing sex toys and this could be because of the personal freedom felt by them in an ever modernising world of easy reach and communication as well as the availability of these products or lack of it in their locality. At the same time, cultural norms also make it feel fort he consumers the sense of embarrassment while expressing their intention to purchase sex toys. By understanding this interaction and interpaly in different parts of the society with different demographic backgrounds, marketing science could further seek to understand these consumer choices and underlying behaviours about these sex toys in particualr and taboo products in general. The interaction which appears between different cultural identities, different religious backgrounds and any perceptions of any resulting restrictions could be identified and could be helped in directing the consumer behavior and their motivation behind.

As it has been supported by others, (El-Bassiouny, 2015; Jafari & Sandikci, 2016), this study helps giving evidence that consumers sense of privacy, their location, their sense of embarrassment and ethics could also be included in the list of factors which need to be considered while dealing with consumer behaviour towards sex toys purchase. International markets in general are segmented inside the cultures but at the same time, they are segmented between different cultures themselves. To understand this diversity or variance of these drivers which underlined consumer behaviour

International markets are segmented within as well as between cultures and one must understand the diversity of the drivers of segmentation of consumer behaviour. Then these consumers could be categorised not just by their psychological or social wants and needs (Wedel & Kamakura, 2012), at the same time, by their ideological backgrounds resulting from their different demographic characteristics when it came to the purchase of taboo products like sex toys.

6.3 Practical and Business Implications

Research on consumers' purchase intentions of sex toys can provide valuable insights for several reasons. Research in this area can help businesses and entrepreneurs stay informed about changing consumer preferences and market trends. As society's attitudes toward sexuality evolve, understanding what drives consumer choices in this category is essential for businesses to remain competitive. Consumer research can aid in the development of new and innovative sex toy products that better cater to customers' needs and desires. Insights into consumer preferences can inform the design, features, and materials used in these products. By understanding the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions, businesses can develop more effective marketing strategies. This might include targeting specific demographics, crafting persuasive advertising campaigns, or selecting appropriate distribution channels. Sex toys are subject to various regulations and legal standards in different regions. Research can help businesses ensure that their products comply with relevant laws and safety standards, thereby avoiding potential legal issues. Research can contribute to reducing the stigma associated with sex toys and sexual health. By shedding light on consumer behaviours and attitudes, it can help normalize discussions about sexual pleasure and wellness. Sex toys can be important tools for sexual health and well-being, including improving intimacy, reducing stress, and addressing sexual dysfunctions. Research can highlight the positive effects of sex toy use on individuals'

physical and mental health. Consumer research can also be used to educate the public about safe and responsible sex toy use. This can include information about proper cleaning, storage, and disposal, as well as addressing misconceptions or concerns. Understanding the cultural, social, and psychological factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions of sex toys can provide broader insights into human behaviour, relationships, and societal norms. Gathering feedback and understanding customer experiences with sex toys can help businesses improve product quality, customer service, and overall satisfaction, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth. Beyond business applications, research on sex toy purchase intentions can contribute to academic studies and clinical research related to human sexuality, sexual health, and relationship dynamics.

Overall, researching consumers' purchase intentions of sex toys can benefit businesses, individuals, and society as a whole by fostering a better understanding of this aspect of human behavior and promoting responsible and fulfilling sexual experiences.

The success of marketing by businesses ultimately is dependent on the way these businesses understand their consumer behaviour or their attitude as well as perceptions so that these businesses can satisfy their consumer needs and wants. (Chiu, 2014). This study has helped understand that the perception of consumers depending on their sense of privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics affect their choice of purchasing the sex toys. The participants might accept, reject or accept conditionally depending whether it was referred by the other party and that would consequently the consumers buying or shopping behaviour for these products. plays an important in directing their, specially women's attitude towards the sex toys usage and these are the factors that needs to be considered by the businesses. The important point to understand is that although consumers might come from different cultural backgrounds with different demographics, human desire to satisfy and then enhance their sexual needs takes prevalence and this was specially the case when this was analysed on the basis of consumers sense of privacy, location, embarrassment and ethics. By using different marketing techniques involving consumer awareness methods, this could be used by businesses to make consumers feel that while purchasing the sex toys their privacy concerns would be taken into consideration. These products and services could then be made accessible to the target consumers in a way that is convenient for the customers to access and the delivery of these products could be made more discrete to

not cause embarrassment to the customer but at the same time, satisfying their needs and wants. This study could be used by businesses by taking into account the Maslow's theory of hierarchy of human needs how these businesses could trigger their targeted consumers desire to purchase their products by taking into account the demographic factor discussed in this study.

The strongest impact by companies on consumers behaviour is seen as by the advertisement. So it is very important for companies to try to influence the potential consumers to buy the companies' products and services. This is the reason many businesses spend a lot of Money and resources on marketing activities. In the United States alone, billions of Dollars are regularly spent on marketing as well as advertising every year. At the same time, much more Money is spent on other types of marketing activities such as promotion stuff like sweepstakes, displays of products and coupons etc. This shows that this field of advertising has a big and strong influence on peoples' consumption of products and services because all the firms which do advertising, they do that to earn what is called as return on investment for their products and services.

When companies use advertising to promote their products, their goal is to make use of people's needs and wants. For instance, being thirsty is a normal part of anyone's life and it is a basic human need. This need could be taken care of by simply drinking water but companies try their best through their advertising that they want consumers to feel the need or want to drink soda like Coca Cola or Pepsi to fulfill this need of thirst. Hence, these companies give customers option to fulfill their need in more than one ways and while doing so, these companies make use of their customers desires to make money by associating peoples needs with some pleasure.

As an economist John Kenneth Galbraith described, with the emergence of electronic advertising like radio, TV and internet, It has become much more easy for the companies to convey their marketing message to their intended customers. There is a very strong argument in using these electronic means for advertising instead of print media because this allows the repetition of these marketing messages. So there is a bigger chance of reaching these messages to more and more consumers. At the same time, it is also argued that although these kind of marketing and advertising activities do have an effect on consumer behaviour, but the consumers are not to be taken as automatons who would react in a predefined way to these kind of marketing stimuli (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2010). So earlier mentioned factors as well

as these marketing practices need to be taken into account when considering consumer behaviour.

Lastly, restrictions in societies sometimes influence motivation. The marketing mix which includes product, price, place and promotion, when applied to taboo products, it would be more effective if it would address a desire or want to go against the society norms or rebel which is described as motivation to do something which is founded consumers psychological reaction. If this psychological motivation is no longer present with the removal of the restrictions then the marketing mix would need to be adjusted so that it can reflect the changes in consumers motivation.

6.4 Limitations

This study had some limitations because the use of sex toys is a very personal and sensitive topic and some people either might not like to discuss their opinion or answer some questions in a way to hide their embarrassment related to the topic of these intimate details. Like any research study, a study on sex toys can have limitations that researchers should consider. Here are some potential limitations:

One of the most significant limitations in research on sex toys is the potential for sample bias. People who are willing to participate in such studies may not represent the broader population due to social stigma or privacy concerns. This can lead to a non-representative sample that doesn't reflect the diversity of sex toy users.

Participants may be inclined to provide socially desirable responses, particularly when discussing sensitive topics like sexual behaviour. This bias can lead to participants underreporting or misrepresenting their actual experiences and preferences. Participants may have difficulty accurately recalling their past experiences or purchase intentions related to sex toys, leading to inaccuracies in data collection. People may be hesitant to disclose personal information about their sexual behaviours and preferences, even in an anonymous survey, leading to incomplete or inaccurate data. Findings from this specific study may not be generalizable to other populations or contexts, making it challenging to draw broad conclusions about sex toy use. Cultural norms and regulations related to sex toys vary significantly across regions and countries. Research conducted in one cultural context may not apply to others. Participants may selectively participate in a study based on their interest or experience with sex toys, potentially leading to a biased sample. Many studies in this area rely on cross-sectional data, which provides a snapshot of behaviors and attitudes

at a specific point in time. Longitudinal data, which tracks changes over time, can be more informative but is often more challenging to collect. Researchers may face ethical and legal constraints when conducting studies on sensitive topics like sex toys, which can limit the scope and depth of research. Access to data related to sex toy purchases and behaviors can be limited, making it challenging to gather comprehensive information. The study itself may contribute to the perpetuation of social stigma surrounding sex toys, potentially deterring participants from being honest or willing to participate. Individuals who have strong opinions or experiences with sex toys may be more likely to participate in such studies, leading to a self-selection bias.

Also, not all the targeted people were available to participate in this study because of geographical constraints of the people being questioned. So, there was a difference in the number of people in one category than the other, for example most of the people in their twenties answered the questionnaire because the majority of them were students in North Cyprus. Hence, the sample size was not homogenous.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Studies

Researchers should carefully design their studies to mitigate these limitations to the best of their abilities. This may involve using diverse recruitment strategies, ensuring participant anonymity, and employing appropriate research methodologies to collect valid and reliable data. Additionally, acknowledging these limitations in the study's findings and discussing their potential impact is essential for transparent and responsible research in this area.

In future studies, it is recommended that a larger sample of participants to be sought to either confirm the findings of this research study or to see if there were any improvements that could be done to the results of this study. For example, equally comparable number of participants from all genders could be sought, or a similar representation of participants could be attained from all age groups. Similarly, participants with Same Sex and Bisexual sexual orientation could be encouraged to get comparable results along with the straight participants. In this study, most participants from TRNC took part in completing the questionnaires. A bigger number of participants could be sought from different parts of the different countries to compare the results. Future studies could be carried out to see the similarities in consumer

behaviour with different demographic backgrounds but similar buying intentions towards sex toys.

6.6 Conclusion

The final chapter provided a discussion in response to the main objective of the research study. In this chapter, the findings of the study were discussed along with the limitations. Further, there were some recommendations made for any future studies in regards to the sex toys usage was also made.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (2008). Consumer attitudes and behaviour. In C. P. Haugtvedt, P. M. Herr & F. R. Kardes (Eds.), *Handbook of consumer psychology* (pp. 525–548). New York: Psychology Press.
- Attwood, F. (2006). Sexed up: theorizing the sexualization of culture. *Sexualities*, 9(1), 77–94. doi:10.1177/1363460706053336
- Baker, S. M., Gentry, J. W., & Rittenburg, T. L. (2005). Building understanding of the domain of consumer vulnerability. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 25(2), 128–139. doi:10.1177/0276146705280622
- Bataille, G. (1962). *Erotism: death & sensuality*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (2004). Money, sex and happiness: an empirical study. *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 106(3), 393–415. doi:10.1111/j.0347-0520.2004.00369.x
- Bridges, A. J., Condit, D. M., Dines, G., Johnson, J. A. & West, C. M. (2015). Introducing Sexualization, Media, & Society. *Sexualization, Media, & Society*, 1(1), 1–4. doi:10.1177/2374623815588763
- Crewe, L., & Martin, A. (2017). Sex and the city: branding, gender and the commodification of sex consumption in contemporary retailing. *Urban Studies*, 54(3), 582–599. doi:10.1177/0042098016659615
- Dahl, D. W., Manchanda, R. V., & Argo, J. J. (2001). Embarrassment in consumer purchase: the roles of social presence and purchase familiarity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(3), 473–481. doi:10.1086/323734
- Döring, N. M. (2009). The Internet's impact on sexuality: a critical review of 15 years of research. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(5), 1089–1101. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2009.04.003.
- Eaglin, A., & Bardzell, S. (2011). Sex toys and designing for sexual wellness. *CHI EA '11 Extended abstracts on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 1837–1842).
- Fisher, C., Herbenick, D., Reece, M., Dodge, B., Satinsky, S., & Fischtein, D. (2010). Exploring sexuality education opportunities at in-home sex-toy parties in the United States. *Sex Education*, 10(2), 131–144. doi:10.1080/14681811003666341

- Gilbert, P. (1997). The evolution of social attractiveness and its role in shame, humiliation, guilt and therapy. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 70(2), 113–147.
- Gould, S. J. (1991). Toward a theory of sexuality and consumption: Consumer lovemaps. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 18, 381–383
- Goulding, C., Shankar, A., Elliott, R., & Canniford, R. (2008). The marketplace management of illicit pleasure. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(5), 759–771. doi:10.1086/592946
- Hakim, C. (2015). Economies of desire: sexuality and the sex industry in the 21st century. *Economic Affairs*, 35(3), 329–348. doi:10.1111/ecaf.12134
- Hofstede, G. Culture's consequences – 2001
Kroeber, A. & Kluckholm, C. Culture, a critical review of concepts and definition – 1952
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/587109/size-of-the-global-sex-toy-market/>
- Kontula, O. (2009). *Between sexual desire and reality: the evolution of sex in Finland*. The Family Federation of Finland, The Population Research Institute (D49), Helsinki.
- Lieberman, H. (2017a). Intimate transactions: Sex toys and the sexual discourse of second-wave feminism. *Sexuality & Culture*, 21(1), 96–120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-016-9383-9>
- Manceau, D., & Tissier-Desbordes, E. (2006). Are sex and death taboos in advertising? An analysis of taboos in advertising and a survey of French consumer perceptions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 25(1), 9-33. doi:10.1080/02650487.2006.11072949
- Mc Graw Hill, Hodgelts, R. & Luthans, F. - International Management, culture, strategy and behavior, fourth edition - 2000
- Nichols, B. S., Raska, D., & Flint, D. J. (2015). Effects of consumer embarrassment on shopping basket size and value: a study of the millennial consumer. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14, 41–56. doi:10.1002/cb.1500
- Sabri, O. (2012). Preliminary investigation of the communication effects of “taboo” themes in advertising. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(1/2), 215–236.
- Smith, C. (2007). Designed for pleasure: style, indulgence and accessorized sex. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 167–184. doi:10.1177/1367549407075901

- Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. & Hogg, M. - Consumer Behavior, A European Perspective – Fourth edition
- Steckler A, McLeroy KR, Goodman RM, Bird ST, McCormick L - Toward integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: An introduction – 1992.
- Walther, L., & Schouten, J. W. (2016). Next stop, pleasure town: identity transformation and women's erotic consumption. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), 273–283. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.040
- Wilner, S. J. S., & Huff, A. D. (2017). Objects of desire: The role of product design in revising contested cultural meanings. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(3/4), 244–271.
- Wilson, A., & West, C. (1981). The marketing of 'unmentionables'. *Harvard Business Review*, 59(1), 91–102.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF SEX TOYS

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES						
Gender:	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Relationship Status:	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partner / Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Age group:	18-29	<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39	<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49	<input type="checkbox"/>
					50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>
					60-69	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Above 70	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation:	Straight	<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Background:	Primary/High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undergraduate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			Graduate Degree and Above	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Do You follow any Religion:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Where are you from:	Asia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Europe	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Americas	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2: PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SEX TOYS (PE)				
Please answer Yes, No, or No Answer in each of the following questions				
R	Questions	YES	NO	Prefer Not to Answer
PE1	Have you searched for information about the Sex Toys in the past?			
PE2	Have you looked up Sex Toys in an online shop before?			
PE3	Have you bought Sex Toys before?			
PE4	Have you received Sex toys as gift before?			
PE5	Have you used Sex Toys in Solo Capacity before?			

PE6	Have you used Sex Toys with partner before?			
PE7	Have you suggested sex toys usage to your partner in the past?			
PE8	Have you agreed to Sex Toys usage after your partner suggested it in the past?			

SECTION 3: PRIVACY CONCERNS WHILE PURCHASING SEX TOYS (PV)						
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in each of the following statements:						
The Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Weight	1	2	3	4	5	
R	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
PV1	Sometimes I may talk about my sex life with my family or friends.					
PV2	I am concerned that buying sex toys might disclose my private sex life to my family.					
PV3	I am concerned that buying sex toys might disclose my personal sex life to my friends.					
PV4	I am concerned that buying sex toys might disclose my personal sex life to other people in general.					
PV5	I am concerned that buying sex toys might disclose my personal sex life to the business from where I buy it from.					
PV6	I would buy sex toys in discrete packaging due to privacy concerns.					

PV7	I would prefer buying sex toys online than in a store due to privacy concerns.					
-----	--	--	--	--	--	--

SECTION 4: AFFECT OF LOCATION WHILE PURCHASING SEX TOYS (LC)						
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in each of the following statements:						
The Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Weight	1	2	3	4	5	
R	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
LC1	Sex toys are available to buy IN A STORE where I live.					
LC2	Sex Toys are easily available ONLINE to buy where I live.					
LC3	I would consider buying sex toys if available IN STORE where I live.					
LC4	I would consider buying sex toys if available ONLINE where I live.					
LC5	Availability of Sex Toys to buy is a reason of not using the Sex Toys.					
LC6	I would consider buying Sex Toys if I had lived in a different place.					
LC7	I would consider to travel if I want to buy Sex Toys.					

SECTION 5: AFFECT OF EMBARRASSMENT WHILE PURCHASING SEX TOYS (EB)					
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in each of the following statements:					
The Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Weight	1	2	3	4	5

R	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
EB1	I feel embarrassed while talking with others about my sex life.					
EB2	I feel embarrassed thinking about buying sex toys.					
EB3	I feel embarrassed thinking about using sex toys.					
EB4	I would feel embarrassed if others knew I was thinking to buy sex toys.					
EB5	I would feel embarrassed if others knew I was thinking to use sex toys.					
EB6	I would feel embarrassed I recommended my partner to use the sex toys.					
EB7	I would feel embarrassment if I would recommend others to buy sex toys.					

SECTION 6: AFFECT OF ETHICS WHILE PURCHASING SEX TOYS (ET)						
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement in each of the following statements:						
The Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Weight	1	2	3	4	5	
R	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
ET1	I think of Sex as part of my Ethics principles.					
ET2	I give higher value to my Ethics than sex or related activities.					
ET3	While thinking about sex toys, I always take into account my Ethics.					
ET4	I would consider purchasing Sex Toys if my Ethics allowed it.					

ET5	I take into account Ethical Practices of the business while purchasing Sex Toys					
ET6	I would feel morally bad if I would use Sex Toys.					
ET7	I don't think people should use Sex Toys because it is against the Ethics.					

Appendix B
Ethics Approval



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

05.06.2023

Dear Khalid Khurshid

Your application titled **“Factors Affecting Consumers Purchasing Intentions Of Sex Toys”** with the application number NEU/SS/2023/1617 has been evaluated by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee and granted approval. You can start your research on the condition that you will abide by the information provided in your application form.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aşkın KIRAZ'.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KIRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C

Turn It In Result

FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS PURCHASING INTENTIONS OF SEX TOYS

ORIGINALITY REPORT

4%	4%	1%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	docs.neu.edu.tr Internet Source	2%
2	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	1%
3	Submitted to Heriot-Watt University Student Paper	<1%
4	openaccess.city.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
5	ir.lib.uth.gr Internet Source	<1%
6	repository.unipasby.ac.id Internet Source	<1%
7	etd.aau.edu.et Internet Source	<1%
8	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	<1%
9	Submitted to Napier University Student Paper	<1%
10	Submitted to Federal University of Technology Student Paper	<1%
11	dlyons01.web-prod.development.adelaide.edu.au Internet Source	<1%
12	dvodbm.com	<1%