

Determinants of Consumer Awareness of Afghan Domestic Products: Evidence from Eastern Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

Consumer awareness plays a significant role in the competitiveness of indigenous products in growing markets. But empirical evidence on its drivers in developing countries like Afghanistan is still limited. This study aims to examine the factors influencing consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products using an integrative model including product attributes, promotional activities, socio-cultural effects, and the moderating role of consumer age. A thorough questionnaire was distributed to 396 clients in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman. Correlation, multiple regression, and moderation analyses were used to test the hypotheses. The results show that perceived quality, perceived value, pricing, availability and distribution, social impact, and customer ethnocentrism significantly affect consumer awareness. In contrast, no statistical significance was obtained for packaging and labeling, marketing and digital visibility, brand trustworthiness and repute, and age. The results reveal that in the setting of the emerging market studied, functional and socio-cultural features influence consumer awareness more than the branding and promotional aspects. The research contributes to the literature of consumer behavior by providing empirical data from an unexplored context. Local manufacturers and marketers need to stress product excellence, value and pricing, market accessibility, distribution methods and social effect to increase consumer recognition and improve the competitiveness of Afghan local goods. The findings can be used by policymakers to formulate measures to improve the visibility and competitiveness of indigenous products on the market.

KEYWORDS: Perceived quality, Perceived value, Social influence, Consumer ethnocentrism, Product distribution, Emerging markets

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers' awareness is an important notion connected to brand appraisal, purchase behavior, and product image (Maker, 1996; Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiff man & Wisenblit, 2019). Previous studies (Silayoi & Speech, 2007; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999) have shown that consumer awareness is influenced by

product attributes, market conditions and socio-psychological factors such as perceived quality and value, accessibility, marketing communication, social influence and brand perceptions.

Consumer awareness is particularly important in developing countries, as local manufacturers often compete with products of multinationals for more promotional support, greater availability and higher brand recognition. Therefore, promoting awareness of locally created products can enhance economic stability and the expansion of home industries (OECD, 2019; UNIDO, 2020).

Domestic production is important for employment, economic independence and economic diversification in Afghanistan (Zaheer & Sadiq, 2023). Domestic producers, however, nonetheless face limited market awareness, inadequate marketing skills, undeveloped distribution networks and strong competition from imported goods (World Bank, 2024; UNDP, 2024). Although consumer ethnocentrism, purchasing intentions and attitudes toward foreign goods have been extensively studied, there is little empirical data on the factors influencing consumers' understanding of household items. This difference is particularly evident in Eastern Afghanistan, where there is still a lack of research on consumer awareness and direct competition between local and international items (Rahim et al., 2023). Therefore, the current research investigates the factors impacting the knowledge of consumers about Afghan local products in eastern Afghanistan.

1.2 Research Problem

The local markets are adequately stocked with indigenous commodities of Afghanistan; nevertheless, the consumers are yet to be well aware of their features and availability. This provides a problem for indigenous firms seeking to increase their market share and successfully compete with imported goods. The lack of market opportunities, an unstable private sector climate, inadequate market mechanisms, and strong import competition further constrain their market entry (World Bank, 2024, 2025; UNDP, 2024).

Domestic production is crucial for Afghanistan's employment and economic diversification (Zaheer & Sadiq, 2023). However, product availability alone does not assure consumer awareness or interest, especially when locally created items could be seen to be less dependable than imported counterparts (Rahim et al., 2023). Consumer ethnocentrism can foster home product preferences but does not necessarily result in enhanced consumer awareness or more competitive local goods.

Despite the importance of consumer awareness in the market performance of domestic product, however, there is a lack of empirical investigation on its drivers in Afghanistan. Up to date, there has been limited research on the factors affecting understanding of Afghan indigenous items, which has largely focused on customer ethnocentrism, purchase intention and attitudes toward foreign products. This difference is especially important in Eastern Afghanistan, where local and imported commodities compete directly. Hence, in this context, it is important to know the elements influencing consumer awareness of how Afghan indigenous products may be made more visible and competitive in the market.

1.3 Objectives of Research

1. To assess the awareness level of Afghan domestic products among Eastern Afghan consumers.
2. To test the effects of identified determinants on consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products and to examine the moderating role of age in these relationships.
3. To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.

1.4 Hypotheses Development

Previous literature reveals that awareness among consumers depends upon product-related, marketing-related, social and psychological determinants. The consumer awareness of local products can be increased through their recognition of their value, availability, visibility, and promotion. Furthermore, brand trust and consumer ethnocentrism can also improve their awareness of local products. The following hypotheses have been formulated after considering all the theoretical and empirical findings presented in the literature review:

H1: Product quality positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H2: Product value positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H3: Packaging and labeling positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H4: Availability and distribution positively affect consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H5: Promotion and digital exposure positively affect consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H6: Social influence positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H7: Consumer ethnocentrism positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H8: Brand trust positively affects consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

H9: Age will moderate the relationship between determinants and consumer awareness about Afghan domestic products.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The study contributes to the literature of consumer behaviour and marketing of domestic products by examining consumer awareness of domestic products as a separate outcome, which has been under researched empirically in developing countries. It develops and tests an integrated framework with product-related, market-related, and sociocultural determinants with the moderating role of age. It extends the applicability of Information Processing Theory, Social Learning Theory, Perceived Value Theory, and Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory to domestic-product awareness.

Empirical research in Afghanistan suggests that the most important measure of consumer awareness is perceived quality, followed by perceived value and price, availability and distribution, social impact and customer ethnocentrism. However, as age did not significantly attenuate the linkage and packaging and labelling, marketing and internet exposure, brand trust and reputation were not meaningful. The results imply that, given the environment of the emerging-market analyzed, functional and sociocultural elements may play a larger role in consumer awareness than branding and promotional considerations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The research used information processing theory, social learning theory, consumer ethnocentrism theory and perceived value theory to explain customer awareness toward domestically created products. All of these theories indicate that consumer awareness is a multidimensional process that is affected by social interaction, information processing, perceived value and ethnocentric notions.

According to the Knowledge Processing Theory, consumers become more aware through the learning and knowledge acquisition processes (Bettman, 1979). Accordingly, product and market features such as quality, value, pricing, design, presentation, availability, digital exposure and marketing campaigns, and brand

perceptions serve as informational stimuli that facilitate product recognition. This perspective corresponds to the research on customer-based brand equity, which points out the importance of awareness in the consumer's perception and appraisal of brands (Keller, 1993).

In addition, social learning theory suggests that consumer knowledge is constructed through individual information processing and observed learning (Bandura, 1977). Interaction with friends, family and other social groups can give customers knowledge and experience relating to products, which can improve their awareness of domestic products. According to Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory, consumers are more likely to be aware of and recognize local products when they believe that purchasing national products is good for the economy of the country (Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Another explanation is Perceived Value Theory. This theory focuses on how purchasers assess the benefits of a product versus its costs (Zeithaml, 1988). This means that things that are perceived as beneficial, reliable and with good pricing could attract more clients and generate awareness.

These principles have been widely applied in consumer behavior research, although there has been limited integrated application of these theories to consumer awareness of domestic objects. Information processing, social impact, perceived value, and consumer ethnocentrism have been addressed separately in previous research with little attention to their interaction in shaping local product awareness in emerging economies. This study covers this theoretical vacuum by integrating multiple perspectives into one framework and studying their relations with consumer awareness within the framework of Afghanistan.

2.2 Empirical Review

Consumer awareness plays a very crucial role in the evaluation and purchase of items because customers are unlikely to go for anything they know little or nothing about. The information processing theory argues that customers are aware of the learning process and react to different market clues (Bettman, 1979; Keller, 2013). Marketing efforts increase consumer awareness through the provision of relevant product information (Al-Assaf, 2024; Rana et al., 2024). Unusual packaging can also help customers to detect and evaluate important product aspects (Chirilli et al., 2022; Śęwik-Pruska et al., 2022). Rahim et al. (2023) argue that Afghan customers are ethnocentric in taste but they widely employ foreign goods. Studies have also demonstrated that perceived quality, safety, demography and packaging affect the customer attitude toward local products

(Ahmadzai et al., 2025; Joya et al., 2025; Rahim et al., 2025). However, there are few studies on factors influencing consumers' knowledge of locally produced items.

Consumers are more likely to notice things they perceive as reliable, safe and satisfactory, hence perceived quality is projected to positively influence customer awareness. Product quality is an important aspect in determining consumers' responses such as satisfaction and trust (Hajduk et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2025; Zaheer et al., 2025). Previous studies have shown that further research from Afghanistan shows that the quality of local milk, fruit products, sweet oranges and perfumes impacts consumer reactions (Ahmadzai et al., 2025; Joya et al., 2025; Nori et al., 2026; Rahim et al., 2025). The results imply that consumers may use quality as an essential information cue to identify local items.

Pricing and perceived value are also expected to influence consumer awareness. Perceived value has been demonstrated as a significant predictor of satisfaction, loyalty, purchase intention, and brand trust (But et al., 2024; Chi & Phan, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2024; Pham & Nguyen, 2024; Walia & Kumar, 2022). It is the consumer's perception of the superiority of the product relative to its cost (Zeithaml, 1988). Evidence from Afghanistan also suggests that consumers are sensitive to product quality, safety, pricing and service quality (Ahmadzai et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2020). Price and perceived value may therefore be crucial markers for consumer assessment and awareness. What they do to knowledge about locally-produced commodities in eastern Afghanistan, however, is unknown.

Labeling and packaging can be utilized to generate product information and interest. Previous studies have demonstrated that beautiful packaging can attract attention, while informative labeling helps consumers grasp product qualities (Silayoi & Speech, 2007; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008; Underwood & Klein, 2002). Packaging has also been linked to consumer decision-making and perceptions of product quality, especially in the case of food and green products (Herbes et al., 2020; Javeed et al., 2022; Śęwik-Pruska et al., 2022). Packaging has also been associated with clients' assessment and purchase of perfumes in Afghanistan (Khan et al., 2025; Rahim et al., 2025). However, no research has been conducted thus far on its specific impact on the knowledge of Afghan indigenous objects in Eastern Afghanistan.

Higher availability and diversity of products may improve consumer awareness and interest (Chandon et al., 2009; Driesch et al., 2009; Fitzsimons, 2000). However, prolonged stock outs may reduce consumer interest and encourage moving between stores or brands. Hence, higher availability and wider distribution are expected to lead to higher customer awareness. Long periods of non-availability of the product may have negative effects

on consumer reactions and conversion from awareness to purchase (Astrup & Kotzab, 2010; Dadzie & Winston, 2007). There is evidence from Afghanistan (Ahmadzai et al., 2025; Poole, 2018) that poor coordination of value chains can hinder the supply and distribution of local dairy and other domestic products. Therefore, greater distribution and availability can raise awareness of local products among consumers, but no actual data are available on their impact on awareness of domestic products in Eastern Afghanistan.

Marketing and digital exposure are expected to influence consumer awareness by providing a means of contact and engagement with target groups. Digital technologies hold the ability to enhance the pace and accessibility of marketing communications (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Tutin & Solomon, 2020). Digital advertising and social media marketing can increase product and brand exposure (Wived et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025), while digital communication and influencer marketing can improve consumer engagement, trust and awareness (Zaheer et al., 2026). Moreover, the evidence from Afghanistan shows that digital marketing and advertising strategies have an impact on customer behavior (Ghafourzay & Parilti, 2021; Ayoubi & Naweer, 2024; Hasn't et al., 2025). However, there is still little empirical research on the relationship between marketing, internet exposure and awareness of indigenous products in eastern Afghanistan.

Social influence by peers, family, online reviews, word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) can increase consumer awareness and exposure of the product. Previous research has shown that WON, eWOM, and social stimuli affect consumers' behavior, particularly in social commerce (Chevalier & Mazlin, 2006; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2024). Furthermore, social media advertising, social media marketing, and word-of-mouth affect consumer attitudes, perceptions, purchase intentions, and SME performance (Ghafourzay & Parilti, 2020; Hasn't et al., 2023; Mosavi & Gunawan, 2024). These results suggest that social influence can enhance awareness of domestic products.

Consumer ethnocentrism, the belief that buying imported products will be detrimental to domestic industries and producers (Ship & Sharma, 1987; Josiassen et al., 2011), is a concept. Recent studies (Baker et al., 2023; Yadav, 2024) indicate that ethnocentrism remains a strong influencer of consumer behavior. Ethnocentrism, cultural identity, trust and other market-related factors influence consumer responses toward domestic and foreign products, but these influences do not always lead to preferences for domestic products (Ahmadzai et al., 2025; A min et al., 2025; Bagh & Sadeghi, 2025; Nori et al., 2026; Rahim et al., 2023; Shinwari, 2025). Therefore, consumer ethnocentrism might potentially affect the knowledge of Afghan indigenous products.

Famous brands are easier to recognize and remember (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994), hence it is expected that the brand image and trust will impact customer awareness. The effect of trust on customer loyalty, purchasing intention and satisfaction has been previously reported in the literature (Açıkgöz et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). Moreover, brand trust has been found to affect consumers' attitudes, buying intentions, and brand perceptions (Liu & Wang, 2023). Ethnic identity is found to affect brand trust perception in Afghanistan, where brand trust is an important determinant of online buying intentions and local brands are viewed as inferior to global brands (Bagh & Sadeghi, 2025; Omani et al., 2022; Rahim et al., 2023). However, there is little data about the effect of brand image and trust on consumers' perception of local Afghan products.

Differences in information processing capacities, digital readiness, trust and susceptibility to social influences may influence customer behavior owing to age. Previous research has highlighted age as a possible mediator of the links between perceived value, loyalty, online shopping and consumer behavior in digital contexts (Merci et al., 2021; Molinillo et al., 2021; Indian et al., 2024). Recent study has highlighted the significance of age in digital technologies, online commerce, and content marketing (Abdelkader, 2023; Bianchi & Saleh, 2026; Bubphapant & Brandão, 2024). Age has also been researched as a modulator of online purchase behavior and food advertising in Afghanistan (Animi et al., 2020; Omani et al., 2022). The results indicate that age can be a moderator of the association of the proposed variables and consumer awareness of home products.

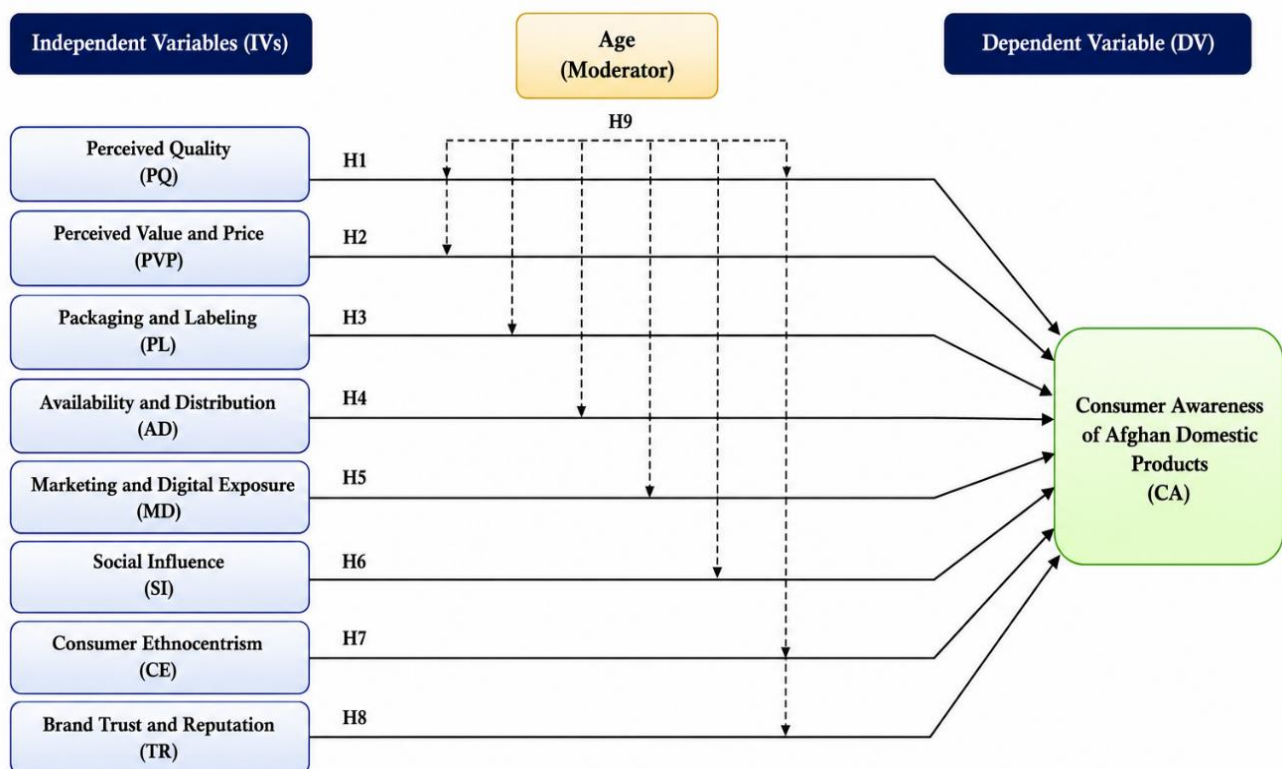
2.3 Research Gap

Despite the increased number of studies on consumer behavior, domestic goods, and consumer ethnocentrism, major gaps in the literature still exist. Previous studies have focused more on purchase intention, product preferences, brand attitudes, and ethnocentrism. However, consumer awareness of domestic products has not been widely considered as a separate outcome. Moreover, the elements such as perceived quality, packaging, marketing exposure, social impact, ethnocentrism and trust have been researched largely in isolation and not much integrated into a full framework; little consideration has been given to the moderating effect of consumer age. These lacunas are especially visible in the case of Afghanistan, where empirical evidence is still lacking about the factors affecting the understanding of indigenous items. This study fills these gaps by examining the moderating effect of age, and integrating market-related, product-related and sociocultural aspects into one paradigm. This study is an empirical contribution from Eastern Afghanistan to increase the understanding of consumer awareness of indigenous products in an underresearched emerging-market context.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

On the basis of literature and theory, this study proposes that consumer awareness about the domestic products of Afghanistan will be influenced by quality perceptions, value perceptions, packaging and labeling, availability, marketing exposures, social influences, consumer ethnocentrism, and brand trust and reputation. It is believed that these variables will affect consumer awareness about domestic products. Age will be introduced as a moderating variable to see how age affects these determinants to influence consumer awareness. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In this research, a quantitative cross-sectional design is used. Study design is quantitative research because it enables the collection of quantitative data and analysis of this data statistically. The application of quantitative research techniques will help in testing hypotheses and exploring relationships among different constructs (Creswell, 2014; Hair et al., 2019). The study uses a cross-sectional design since data will be collected from

respondents at one point in time, which is suitable for the investigation of current consumer awareness on Afghan products.

3.2 Research Location and Population

The study was conducted in three provinces of Eastern Afghanistan, including Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman. Consumers who are aware of domestically produced Afghan products are considered the target population.

3.3 Sampling Method and Sample Size

The minimum sample size was obtained using Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977) for a large population. The minimum sample size was 384 at the 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent margin of error. However, 396 usable responses were gathered. The respondents were picked by the convenience sample technique due to their availability and desire to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). This strategy was useful to contact clients in all the targeted provinces. However, because the respondents were not randomly picked, selection bias may have been created due to its non-probability nature. The sample may therefore not be typical of all clients in Eastern Afghanistan and this limits the generalizability of the findings. Probability-based sampling can be used in future studies to improve generalizability and representativeness.

3.4 Sources of Data

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered from consumers through surveys with the help of an interview schedule. Secondary data comprised scholarly literature, including books, journals, and past studies on consumer awareness and behavior.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

The measurement tool included a structured questionnaire, based on the instruments used to measure consumer behavior and marketing. The variables measured for the data collection included consumer awareness, perceived quality, perceived value and price, packaging and labeling, availability and distribution, marketing and digital exposure, social influence, consumer ethnocentrism, and brand trust/reputation. The participants answered the questions using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) (Likert, 1932; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

3.6 Pilot Testing

To check reliability and validity, a pilot test was conducted with 187 participants before applying the main survey (Creswell, 2014). The data collected through pilot testing was analyzed with the help of SPSS software. For testing reliability and convergent validity, the measures taken included factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) score, and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 3.6 below, all validity and reliability conditions of the constructs were satisfied. All factor loadings exceeded the threshold value. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores indicate internal consistency, which may be judged by these measures. Besides, AVE scores show that the requirement for convergent validity was also fulfilled (Hair et al., 2019). One question from the (Brand Trust and Reputation) construct was dropped due to low factor loading.

Table 1: Pilot Test Reliability and Convergent Validity Results (n = 187)

Construct	No. of Items	Factor Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Consumer Awareness	4	0.710–0.794	0.757	0.847	0.581
Perceived Quality	4	0.767–0.857	0.832	0.888	0.666
Perceived Value and Price	4	0.626–0.853	0.772	0.854	0.597
Packaging and Labelling	4	0.746–0.853	0.794	0.868	0.622
Availability and Distribution	4	0.791–0.827	0.821	0.883	0.653
Marketing and Digital Exposure	4	0.733–0.819	0.801	0.870	0.627
Social Influence	4	0.775–0.833	0.807	0.875	0.636
Consumer Ethnocentrism	4	0.795–0.859	0.846	0.900	0.693
Brand Trust and Reputation	3	0.733–0.865	0.743	0.857	0.667

Source: Author's computation based on survey data using IBM SPSS Statistics.

3.7 Method of Collecting Data

The process of collecting data relied on combining two types of surveys – offline and online surveys. To elaborate further, online surveys were conducted using Google Forms, while offline surveys were conducted among selected participants from certain provinces.

3.8 Variables of the Study

Consumer awareness is the study's dependent variable, and the effects of perceived quality, perceived value and price, packaging and labeling, availability and distribution, marketing and digital exposure, social influence, consumer ethnocentrism, and brand trust and reputation are investigated as important antecedents. In order to investigate if the strength of these associations varies among various demographic groups, age is also added as a moderating variable.

3.9 Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics and Hayes' process macro were used for conducting the data analysis. The frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for describing the respondents and other variables. The reliability test for all the variables was conducted by calculating Cronbach's alpha, whereas validity tests were conducted by performing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), CMO measure, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2019). Pearson correlation analysis was used for analyzing relationships among the variables, whereas hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. Moderation analysis was performed using process Macro Model 1.

For investigating the influence of various factors on consumer awareness about domestic Afghan products, the regression model below was constructed:

$$CA = \beta_0 + \beta_1PQ + \beta_2PVP + \beta_3MD + \beta_4CE + \beta_5SI + \beta_6AD + \beta_7PL + \beta_8TR + \varepsilon$$

In the above model, CA indicates Consumer Awareness, PQ indicates Perceived Quality, PVP indicates Perceived Value and Price, MD indicates Marketing and Digital Exposure, CE indicates Country-of-Origin Image and Consumer Ethnocentrism, SI indicates Social Influence, AD indicates Availability and Distribution, PL indicates Packaging and Labeling, and TR indicates Brand Trust and Reputation. In the above model, β_0 stands for the constant value, $\beta_1 - \beta_8$ are regression coefficients, and ε is error term.

process Model 1 was used for evaluating the impact of each variable as moderating variables.

$$CA = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \beta_2Age + \beta_3(X \times Age) + \varepsilon$$

In the above model, X represents the set of all predictor variables, and Age is used as a moderator. The above model is called an interaction model as $X \times Age$ represents the interaction.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Participation in the research was voluntary, and each respondent gave their consent to participating in the process of data collection. All respondents knew the objectives of the research and were aware that any information provided would be anonymous and confidential.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

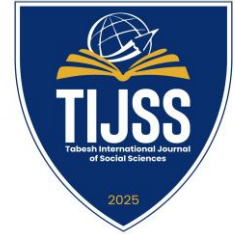
This portion provides results of the research obtained from the empirical analysis carried out in order to analyze the factors affecting consumer awareness of Afghan domestic goods in Eastern Afghanistan. The analysis starts with the demographic information of the respondents, then descriptive analysis, reliability and validity, correlation analysis, and multiple regression results. Finally, the moderating effect of age will be tested using the process Macro in order to know whether the relationship between study variables and consumer awareness differ depending on the age of the consumers.

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Three hundred ninety-six individuals were interviewed during this study. The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 4.1 below. The sample was relatively young, with 85.1% of the respondents falling within the age bracket 18 to 25 years old. 97% of the respondents were males. 86.9% of the respondents had completed their bachelor's degree. The main category of the occupation group was students, 68.2%. Other occupations included business people (10.1%), government employees (8.8%), employees (8.6%), and unemployed (4.3%). The geographic regions that made up the study sample included the three provinces of Eastern Afghanistan (Laghman, Nangarhar and Kunar), accounting for 46.2%, 39.6%, and 14.1%, respectively.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 396)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	387	97.7
	Female	9	2.3
Age Group	18-25 years	337	85.1



	26-35 years	40	10.1
	36-45 years	17	4.3
	46-55 years	2	0.5
Education Level	Primary School	3	0.8
	High School	29	7.3
	Bachelor's Degree	344	86.9
	Master's Degree	19	4.8
	PhD	1	0.3
Occupation	Student	270	68.2
	Government Employee	35	8.8
	Private-Sector Employee	34	8.6
	Business Owner	40	10.1
	Unemployed	17	4.3
Province of Residence	Kunar	56	14.1
	Nangarhar	157	39.6
	Laghman	183	46.2

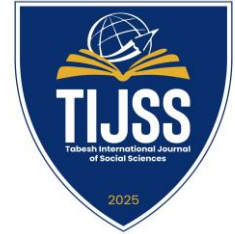
Source: Author's computation based on survey data using IBM SPSS Statistics.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the constructs employed in the research are provided in Table 4.2. On average, Afghan domestic products received quite favorable ratings, with all means exceeding the middle point on the five-point scale. The highest mean was obtained for Consumer Ethnocentrism ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.76$). Consumer Awareness and Social Influence also achieved similar scores ($M = 3.84$). Favorable ratings were received by Marketing and Digital Exposure, as well ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.84$). In terms of mean scores, Perceived Quality, Availability and Distribution, and Packaging and Labeling were the lowest among all constructs. Nevertheless, these scores exceeded the middle point on the scale.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for the Study Constructs

Construct / Variable	Mean	SD	Rank
Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE)	4.19	0.76	1
Consumer Awareness (CA)	3.84	0.68	2
Social Influence (SI)	3.84	0.73	2



Marketing and Digital Exposure (MD)	3.78	0.84	4
Perceived Value and Price (PVP)	3.59	0.78	5
Perceived Quality (PQ)	3.48	0.84	6
Availability and Distribution (AD)	3.45	0.90	7
Packaging and Labelling (PL)	3.44	0.79	8

Source: Author's computation based on survey data using IBM SPSS Statistics.

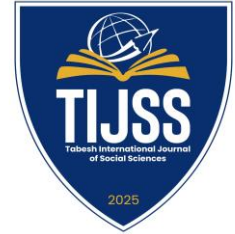
The constructs are arranged in descending order according to their mean scores. All mean scores were greater than the mid-point (3.00) of the five-point Likert scale, suggesting an overall positive attitude towards Afghan made domestic products.

4.3 Testing for Reliability and Validity of the Scale

Prior to conducting the actual analysis, there arose the need to check whether the measurement scale was reliable and valid. The internal reliability of the measurement scale was checked by the Cronbach's Alpha technique, while the construct validity was evaluated by KMO, Factor Loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). From Table 4.3 presented below, it can be seen that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .723 to .827. It was considered appropriate since the KMO was found to range from .735 to .805. Moreover, the factor loadings (.647 - .855), AVE (.550 – .662) and CR (.829-.887) were above the recommended values.

Table 4.3: Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Study Constructs

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	Variance Explained (%)	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Consumer Awareness	4	0.736	0.746	56.18	0.836	0.562
Perceived Quality	4	0.813	0.787	64.28	0.878	0.642
Perceived Price and Value	4	0.757	0.742	57.99	0.845	0.580
Packaging and Labelling	4	0.723	0.735	54.97	0.829	0.550
Availability and Distribution	4	0.803	0.758	62.97	0.872	0.629



Marketing and Digital Exposure	4	0.827	0.805	65.88	0.885	0.659
Social Influence	4	0.797	0.794	62.44	0.869	0.625
Consumer Ethnocentrism	4	0.826	0.792	66.17	0.887	0.662
Brand Trust and Reputation	4	0.760	0.763	58.84	0.851	0.589

Sources: IBM SPSS Statistics and Microsoft Excel

Note: Cronbach's Alpha (α) > 0.70 denotes reliability; KMO > 0.60 denotes adequacy; factor loadings were > 0.60 for all items; AVE > 0.50 & CR > 0.70 denote convergent validity.

4.4 One-Way ANOVA Analysis

One-way ANOVA analysis was carried out to determine differences on the consumer awareness across selected demographic variables. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference based on age groups ($F=4.593$, $p=.004$); however, no statistically significant difference was found in case of education level ($F=1.442$, $p=.219$), occupational status ($F=0.680$, $p=.606$) and location ($F=0.236$, $p=.790$). Although the age variable was statistically significant, the Tukey HSD test did not show any significant pair wise differences. Based on the descriptive statistics, awareness levels were relatively high amongst consumers aged between 18-25 years while awareness levels were lowest amongst consumers aged between 46-55 years.

Table 4.4: One Way ANOVA Results for Consumer Awareness Across Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	F- value	P - value	Interpretation
Age Group	4.593	0.004	Significant
Education Level	1.442	0.219	Not Significant
Occupation	0.680	0.606	Not Significant
Place of Residence	0.236	0.790	Not Significant

Source: Author's computation based on survey data using IBM SPSS Statistics.

Note: Statistical significance was established at the 5% level ($p < .05$).

4.5 Correlation Analysis

This analysis was conducted to identifies the relationship among the study variables through the Pearson correlation technique analysis. Based on the results obtained, it is to be said that the assumptions of linearity,

normality, and non-influencing outliers have been satisfied after conducting the diagnosis tests. It is further identified that there is a positive relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables at $p < .01$ significance level. The highest correlation values were found for consumer awareness and perceived quality (.484), value and price (.475), and social influence (.456). In addition to this, it was found that marketing and digital exposure, availability and distribution, consumer ethnocentrism, brand trust and reputation, and packaging and labeling had a positive significant correlation with the dependent variable.

Table 4.5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	CA	PQ	PVP	PL	AD	MD	SI	CE	TR
CA	1								
PQ	.484**	1							
PVP	.475**	.597**	1						
PL	.338**	.497**	.506**	1					
AD	.395**	.357**	.412**	.409**	1				
MD	.404**	.290**	.411**	.423**	.385**	1			
SI	.456**	.392**	.453**	.447**	.409**	.601**	1		
CE	.395**	.249**	.328**	.241**	.239**	.495**	.465**	1	
TR	.372**	.261**	.389**	.348**	.331**	.443**	.532**	.597**	1

Notes: CA - consumer awareness; PQ - perceived quality; PVP - perceived value & price; PL - packaging & labeling; AD - availability & distribution; MD - marketing & digital presence; SI - social influence; CE - consumer ethnocentrism; TR - brand trust & reputation. * ** $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Source: Author's computation based on survey data using IBM SPSS Statistics.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Several tests have been done in order to confirm whether the required assumptions for multiple regressions have been satisfied in preparation for doing the regression analysis. It has become clear that the requirements for multiple regression have been satisfied because there are no problems related to multicollinearity as shown by the levels of tolerance which fall between .497 and .719 while those of the variance inflation factor (VIF) vary from 1.391 to 2.010. The assumption of normality has also been confirmed considering the significant values of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. There is also no problem about autocorrelation in the light of the Durbin-Watson test where its value is 1.886.

Table 4.6: Regression Diagnostic Tests

Assumption	Indicator	Result	Decision
Linearity	Scatterplot	Checked in analysis	Assumption satisfied
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	.497 to .719	No concern
Multicollinearity	VIF	1.391 to 2.010	No concern
Normality	Shapiro -Wilk	p = .205	Assumption satisfied
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p = .126	Assumption satisfied
Independence of errors	Durbin-Watson	1.886	Assumption satisfied
Influential outliers	Cook's Distance	Max = .043	No influential outliers

Based on the results obtained from the regression analysis, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(8, 387) = 30.695$, $p < .001$. The regression model accounts for 38.8% of the variance in Consumer Awareness (CA); as seen from the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the adjusted R^2 ; $R^2 = .388$; Adjusted $R^2 = .376$. It can be noted that the variable that predicted Consumer Awareness the best was Perceived Quality ($\beta = .261$, $p < .001$). Consumer Ethnocentrism ($\beta = .149$, $p = .005$), Availability and Distribution ($\beta = .140$, $p = .003$), Perceived Value and Price ($\beta = .140$, $p = .011$), and Social Influence ($\beta = .124$, $p = .028$) were positively associated with Consumer Awareness. Non-statistical predictors were Packaging and Labeling ($\beta = -.055$, $p = .288$), Marketing and Digital Exposure ($\beta = .077$, $p = .159$), and Brand Trust and Reputation ($\beta = .034$, $p = .537$).

Table 4.7: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	SE	β	T	p
Perceived Quality	.210	.042	.261	4.976	.001
Perceived Value and Price	.120	.047	.140	2.548	.011
Packaging and Labelling	-.047	.044	-.055	-1.065	.288
Availability and Distribution	.105	.035	.140	2.982	.003
Marketing and Digital Exposure	.063	.044	.077	1.410	.159
Social Influence	.117	.053	.124	2.204	.028
Consumer Ethnocentrism	.141	.050	.149	2.811	.005
Brand Trust and Reputation	.032	.052	.034	.618	.537

Model Statistics: $R = .623$; $R^2 = .388$; Adjusted $R^2 = .376$; $F(8, 387) = 30.695$; $p < .001$

4.7 Moderation Analysis

Age group was considered as a potential moderator using the Hayes PROCESS Macro Model 1. Prior to running the analysis, all independent variables as well as the moderating variable were mean centered. The diagnostics carried out showed that all the required assumptions for the conduct of moderation analysis were fulfilled (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Diagnostics Tests for Moderation Analysis

Assumption	Indicator	Result	Decision
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	.240–.853	Acceptable
Multicollinearity	VIF	1.172 – 4.170	No serious concern
Normality of residuals	Shapiro-Wilk	p = .160	Assumption satisfied
Normality of residuals	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p = .200	Assumption satisfied
Independence of errors	Durbin-Watson	1.893	Assumption satisfied
Influential Outlier	Cook's Distance	Max = .164	No influential cases

None of the interaction terms of age with other predictor variables was significant at 5% level of significance, as shown in Table 4.9 below. While the interaction term of marketing and digital exposure with age ($P=0.0503$) and social influence with age ($P=0.0753$) were very close to being significant, but the confidence interval for the above-mentioned values contained zero value. This implies that the age variable is not acting as a moderator between the determinants of consumer awareness.

Table 4.9: Moderating Effect of Age on Consumer Awareness towards Afghan Domestic Products

Interaction term	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Perceived Quality $\times$ Age	-0.0006	0.0672	-0.01	.9933	[-0.1327, 0.1316]
Perceived Value $\times$ Age	0.1130	0.0715	1.58	.1148	[-0.0275, 0.2535]
Packaging and Labelling $\times$ Age	0.1139	0.0827	1.38	.1690	[-0.0486, 0.2765]
Availability and Distribution $\times$ Age	0.0825	0.0673	1.23	.2205	[-0.0497, 0.2148]
Marketing and Digital Exposure $\times$ Age	0.1388	0.0707	1.96	.0503	[-0.0002, 0.2777]
Social Influence $\times$ Age	0.1483	0.0832	1.78	.0753	[-0.0152, 0.3118]
Consumer Ethnocentrism $\times$ Age	-0.0039	0.0726	-0.05	.9570	[-0.1467, 0.1389]
Brand Trust and Reputation $\times$ Age	0.0535	0.0808	0.66	.5080	[-0.1053, 0.2124]

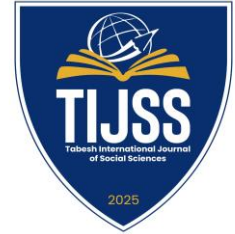
Note: Interaction effect can be described as being statistically significant if $p < .05$ and when the confidence interval does not contain zero.

4.8 Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 4.10 below. As the results show, consumer perception of the product quality, consumer perception of the product value and price, product availability and distribution, social influence, and consumer ethnocentrism influenced consumer awareness of the Afghan domestic products, thereby validating H1, H2, H4, H6, and H7. Product packaging and labeling, marketing and online presence, and product brand trust and reputation failed to have a statistical significance impact on consumer awareness, therefore invalidating H3, H5, and H8. Finally, age was identified as an insignificant moderating variable, implying that H9 cannot be validated.

Table 4.10: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Outcomes

Hypothesis	Proposed Relationship	p-value	Decision
H1	The perceived quality of a product is positively related to consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.001	Supported
H2	Perceived value and price are positively related to consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.011	Supported
H3	Packaging and labeling are positively related to consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.288	Not Supported
H4	Availability and distribution positively affect consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.003	Supported
H5	Marketing activities and digital visibility positively affect consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.159	Not Supported
H6	Social influence is positively related to consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.028	Supported
H7	Ethnocentrism positively affects consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.005	Supported
H8	Brand trust and reputation positively affect consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	.537	Not Supported



H9	Age moderates the relationships among the determinants and consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products.	All interaction terms $p > .05$	Not Supported
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Note: An analysis was taken to be an indication of support for the relevant hypothesis if the effect size obtained was statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < .05$).

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 4.10. The findings indicate that perceived product quality, perceived value and price, product availability and distribution, social influence, and consumer ethnocentrism had statistically significant positive effects on consumer awareness of Afghan domestic products, thereby supporting H1, H2, H4, H6, and H7. Among these factors, perceived product quality had the strongest effect on consumer awareness ($\beta = .261$, $p < .001$), followed by consumer ethnocentrism ($\beta = .149$, $p = .005$), perceived value and price ($\beta = .140$, $p = .011$), availability and distribution ($\beta = .140$, $p = .003$), and social influence ($\beta = .124$, $p = .028$). In contrast, packaging and labeling ($p = .288$), marketing activities and digital visibility ($p = .159$), and brand trust and reputation ($p = .537$) did not have statistically significant effects on consumer awareness, resulting in the rejection of H3, H5, and H8. Furthermore, the moderation analysis showed that age did not significantly moderate the relationships between the determinants and consumer awareness, as all interaction terms had p -values greater than .05; therefore, H9 was not supported. Based on the 5% significance level ($p < .05$), the study supports five hypotheses (H1, H2, H4, H6, and H7) and rejects four hypotheses (H3, H5, H8, and H9).

4. 9 DISCUSSION

The results show that perceived quality was the best predictor of customer awareness amongst all factors ($\beta = .261$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. This finding is consistent with earlier investigations (Hajduk et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2025; Noori et al., 2026). Perceived quality is an important informative cue to identify and assess products by customers as per Information Processing Theory (Bettman, 1979). This in turn could make household goods more salient and easier to identify. Furthermore, perceived value and price had a significant positive impact on customer awareness ($\beta = .140$, $p = .011$), thus confirming H2. This finding is consistent with the Perceived Value Theory (Zeithaml, 1988), which says that customers value products according to their perceived benefits relative to their cost. Consumers may be more focused on domestic goods in current circumstances given the positive sense of value and cost. This result also corroborates recent research stressing the significance of perceived value in consumer reactions (Blut et al., 2024; Pham & Nguyen, 2024). H4 is supported by the considerable effects of availability and distribution on consumer awareness ($\beta = .140$, $p = .003$). This finding is consistent with earlier studies that have found that product availability may boost customer exposure and visibility (Aastrup & Kotzab, 2010; Chandon et al., 2009). The results also corroborate Information Processing

Theory in that the increased accessibility of goods provides more opportunity for buyers to encounter and study information associated with products. H6 was supported by a significant beneficial impact of social influence on consumer awareness ($\beta = .124$, $p = .028$). This finding is in line with previous studies on electronic word-of-mouth and interpersonal communication (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2024; Mosavi & Gunawan, 2024). It also fits Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which implies that customers learn about things through contact and observation with peers, family, and other social groups. H7: Customer ethnocentrism has a statistically significant effect on consumer awareness ($\beta = .149$, $p = .005$). This finding is consistent with other studies in Afghanistan and other contexts (Rahimi et al., 2023; Yadav, 2024; Baghi & Sadeghi, 2025) and the Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Ethnocentrism may influence awareness before later preferences or purchases, as customers who feel buying domestic goods helps the country's economy might be more mindful of local goods. H3, H5 and H8 were rejected because of the lack of statistical significance of packaging and labelling, marketing and digital exposure, and brand trust and reputation respectively. This demonstrates that functional, value-related, availability and sociocultural factors might influence consumer awareness more when combined with the other predictors than promotional and branding-related factors. The non-significant effect of reputation and brand trust may also indicate that trust is more important in the later stages of the product evaluation or purchase process than in the awareness stage. H9 was not supported. Results from the moderation analysis revealed that age did not significantly moderate any of the relationships between the factors and consumer awareness. The current results suggest that the factors that determine the awareness of domestic products work in a fairly consistent manner across age groups in the examined context, while previous studies have established age as a moderator for technology-related and online consumer behavior (Merhi et al., 2021; Indiani et al., 2024; Bianchi & Saleh, 2026). To summarize, the findings provide empirical support for the complementary application of Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory, Perceived Value Theory, Information Processing Theory and Social Learning Theory in explaining consumer awareness. In the context studied, the impact of information, evaluation, social and sociocultural factors is significantly greater than the impact of branding and promotional factors. Thus, the study applies these theoretical perspectives to consumer knowledge of domestic products in a less-studied emerging market context. From a practical point, the results highlight the necessity of enhancing the quality, value, availability, and socially responsible communication of products to increase consumer awareness and improve the competitiveness of Afghan local products.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study evaluated factors impacting consumer awareness of Afghan local products in Eastern Afghanistan. The results indicate that perceived quality, perceived value and price, availability and distribution, social influence, and consumer ethnocentrism have significant effects on consumer awareness, while packaging and

labeling, marketing and digital exposure, and brand trust and reputation were not statistically significant. Furthermore, age did not significantly alter the associations between the suggested factors and customer awareness. The study adds empirical evidence to the literature on consumer behavior and domestic products by expanding the research to an underresearched emerging-market environment and integrating product-related, market-related and socio-cultural elements into a cohesive framework.

From a practical point of view, the findings emphasize the significance of product quality, value and price, market availability, distribution and social influence in raising awareness of Afghan indigenous products. Therefore, producers and policymakers should consider these aspects to improve the visibility of products and competitiveness in the market. However, despite these contributions, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, convenience sample, and geographic concentration on Eastern Afghanistan. Future studies might be conducted with consumers elsewhere in Afghanistan, across multiple product categories, and with different sampling and longitudinal methodologies to reveal additional factors of consumer knowledge.

5.1 Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Improve Product Quality and Value

Domestic producers must create routine methods for quality-control, product testing, safety and uniform production standards. They also should assess production costs and prices from time to time to deliver value for money. These measures can enhance consumer perceptions of quality and value and, in turn, boost awareness of Afghan indigenous products.

2. Strengthen Availability and Distribution

Domestic producers and distributors should improve their inventory management and coordinate their supply with merchants to prevent stock shortages. They should also increase distribution outside the big markets and make sure products are reliably available at retail outlets that are widely used. Regular monitoring of the availability of products may help to sustain customer exposure, and raise awareness.

3. Use Social Influence to Promote Domestic Products

Producers and politicians should create focused word-of-mouth and social-media campaigns with happy consumers, community members and local influencers. The ads should spread information on the quality, value and economic advantages of buying Afghan indigenous products and urge consumers to share their experiences with others. It can heighten social exposure and customer awareness.

5.2 Suggestion's for Further Research

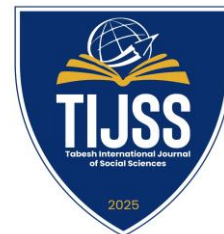
Future studies can build on this research by testing consumer knowledge of local products in other areas of Afghanistan to increase the generalizability of the findings. Probability sampling can also be used to get more representative samples. Longitudinal studies can also study the changes of consumer awareness over time. Moreover, future studies can examine additional possible factors of consumer awareness including consumer income, education, product origin information, and perceived country-of-origin image. The comparative research of native and imported items may also give further insight into the elements that influence customer awareness and preferences in Afghanistan.

5.3 Conflict of Interest:

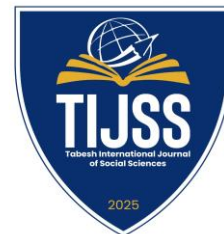
The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, political or religious interests which may have inappropriately influenced the study, analysis and interpretation of the findings.

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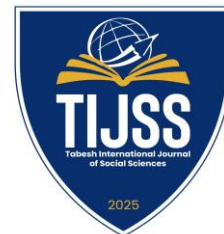
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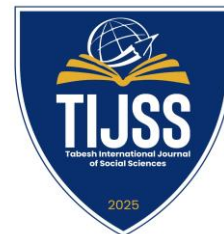
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