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NEW HABITS OF PURCHASE AND CONSUPTION IN THE CLEANING PRODUCTS CATEGORY AFTER THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS

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Master in Marketing

Supervisor:

Prof. Doctor José Pedro da Cunha Catalão Dionísio

ISCTE Business School, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

October 2022

BUSINESS
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Abstract

Covid-19 forced Portugal to enter in two lockdowns, which consequently, highly affected our daily routines and freedoms. This scenario arose the need to evaluate what would be the consequences of this period on the purchasing and consumption habits of the Portuguese families.

In order to answer to this topic, a collaborative study was conducted out by six students, with the guidance of Marketing Future Cast Lab, using the qualitative methodology of *In Situ.* This methodology allowed us to observe pattern behaviors and to have nondirective interviews with all family members, about their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors regarding pandemic and post pandemic period, concerning cleaning products.

The findings obtained shown that there were changes in what regards the FMCG purchase habits during the most critical period of the pandemic. A significant number of consumers began to go less to the supermarkets or the hypermarkets, opting to make larger purchases compared to what they did before. Nevertheless, the habits that were more accepted, after the lockdowns, were the purchase in stores near to the consumer's address and the online purchase.

In what concerns to the cleaning products, most of the interviewed maintained their behaviours. However, the vast majority of the changes that took place, translated in an increase in the purchase and the consumption of these products. There were more changes related to the disinfectants, as this product was perceived by the consumer as a way of protection against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Cleaning Products, FMCG, Covid-19, Lockdown, Consumer Behaviour

JEL Classification System: M31 – Marketing; M39 – Marketing and Advertising: Other

Resumo

A Covid-19 obrigou a Portugal a entrar em dois confinamentos, que como se consequência, fizeram com que as nossa rotinas diárias e liberdades foram altamente afetadas. Este cenário fez com que surgisse a necessidade de avaliar qual seriam as consequências deste período nos hábitos de compra e consumo das famílias portuguesas.

Para responder a este tema foi conduzido um estudo colaborativo por seis alunos, com a orientação do Marketing Future Cast Lab, utilizando uma metodologia qualitativa de *In Situ.* Esta metodologia permitiu-nos observar padrões, comportamentos e ter entrevistas não diretivas com todos membros da família, acerca das suas crenças, atitudes e comportamentos a respeito do período pandémico e pós pandémico, relativamente aos produtos de limpeza.

Os resultados obtidos mostram que houve alterações no que diz respeito aos hábitos de compra de FMCG durante o período mais crítico da pandemia. Um número significativo de consumidores começou a ir menos vezes aos supermercados ou hipermercados, optando por fazer compras maiores do que faziam anteriormente. Porém, os hábitos que foram mais aceites, após os confinamentos, foram as compras em lojas perto de casa e as compras online.

No que diz respeito aos produtos de limpeza, a maioria dos inquiridos manteve os seus comportamentos. Contudo, a larga maioria das alterações que houve, traduziram-se pelo aumento da compra e do consumo destes produtos. Verificou-se mais alterações nos desinfetantes, uma vez este produto era percebido pelo consumidor, como uma forma de se proteger contra a pandemia Covid-19.

Palavras-chave: Produtos de Limpeza, FMCG, Covid-19, Confinamento, Comportamento do Consumidor

Sistema de Classificação JEL: M31 – Marketing; M39 – Marketing and Advertising: Other

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1. Introduction

1.1. Theme

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world has been dealing with a crisis that affects enormous aspects of our society and daily-routine, with huge social and economic consequences (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Associated with a context like this one, there were some contextual changes and an emotional impact which the consumer had to deal with, however in terms of purchasing, he/she behaved in a more rational way during this kind of situation (Theodoridou, Tsakiridou, Kalogeras & Mattas, 2019). This type of context tends to modify patterns of consumer purchase behaviour in the long term as well, and these modifications could become, with time, consumers' new habits and new preferences in terms of brands or products (Arens & Hamilton, 2018).

Having in account this scenario, it is extremely important to study this phenom and the changes that motivated in terms of the purchase antecedents, the consumption behaviour, and the post-purchase behaviour during the lockdowns, and which of these changes stayed after the lockdowns and pandemic period.

Having this situation started with an outbreak of a virus, one of the product categories more interesting to study is the cleaning product, since it is expected that the consumers could change some of his/her old habits. Taking in account the context, it is useful and recommended that consumers have special attention with hygiene and with the environment safety of the house spaces where the families live in a daily basis.

1.2. Research Problems and Objectives

The primary goal of this thesis is to identify what are the main behaviours on issues such as the moment of purchase, consumption and the information shared with others about the two previously moments referred. The necessity of this study has a lot to do with the recent times, in which we all have been dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic that has had numerous consequences in the day-to-day of all society, and in the case of Portugal, it led to two lockdowns in which the population had to stay at home to avoid the propagation of the virus.

Due to these circumstances, customers may have changed their habits during this period and these changes may continue, in some cases, even when the situation got back to normal, as it was described previously. Taking this in account, the main motivation of this study is to understand which were the behaviours within the different families during the lockdowns, and which of these behaviours will prevail in a normal daily basis, in what regards, more specifically, to the cleaning products.

Thus, during this study, we will try to answer to the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the general context of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) purchase?
- RQ2: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the cleaning products purchase?
- RQ3: What is the purchase experience of the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- RQ4: What are the consumption behaviours related to the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- RQ5: What are the post-purchase behaviours related to the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?

1.3. Structure

This thesis consists of a dissertation, as it represents a piece of relevant and rigorous scientific research, which aims to contribute to both the literature and the practice by exploring a relevant topic to the marketing field.

This dissertation is divided in six parts. Firstly, we have the introductory chapter **(Chapter 1)**, which aims to provide a brief overview of the theme and define the objectives and main questions to which the study intends to answer.

Then we have the Contextualization **(Chapter 2)**, that describes and provides some details about the product category being studied and its market, in order to enlighten and provide some information to the readers of this thesis.

The next chapter is reserved to the literature review **(Chapter 3)**, that is organized according to the model adopted from the one of Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2016). In that sense, this chapter is divided in three sections: Background and Purchase Habits, Consumption Behaviour, and Post Purchase Behaviour.

Subsequently, the appropriate methodology used for the research purpose will be addressed (**Chapter 4**). It will be presented the conceptual framework, that is the base model for this thesis, and the *In Situ* methodology, that is a qualitative research method. Moreover, we present the research questions, the sample of the survey and how data was collected and analysed.

Then, we find the chapter that corresponds to the results and discussion **(Chapter 5)**. In this chapter, first we present and discuss some data about the cleaning products preferences, and, then, we present and discuss, in different sections, the results of our research to each one of the topics raised in our research questions.

This dissertation ends with the conclusions and recommendations **(Chapter 6)**, which presents the general overview of the results, the implications the study has for knowledge and management, the limitations of this research and suggestions for future studies about this topic.

2. Cleaning Products Market Contextualization

In the current days, there is a lot of different cleaning products that suit different needs and purposes that the consumers require. Some cleaning products have a more generalized use, like in the case of the bleach, per example, and others that have a more specific utilization, such as the laundry cleaning, the kitchen cleaning, the toilet cleaning, and the disinfestation.

According to the data from Informa D&B (2022), the cleaning products market grew 4,3% in Portugal during 2021, thus surpassing the values registered before the Covid-19 pandemic. At the end of last year, the Portuguese market of this sector represented 720 million euros (€). According to Carvalhosa (2022), this sector showed greater resilience than others facing the pandemic situation, since the values presented are sustained by the necessity of new cleaning products and services, and, also, the demand peaks in the most complicated moments during the pandemic.

During the following dissertation, we will play special attention to the removers and disinfectants. In term of removers, we have three different types: the grease removers, that are specially used in the bathroom cleaning, the limescale remover, that is used mostly in the kitchen, and, finally, the mold and fungus, that is used to eliminate mold and fungus from the walls and ceilings.

In terms of the disinfectants, we have the floor disinfectant, the multi-surface disinfectant, and the toilets disinfectant. All these disinfectants have the same purpose that is to protect the consumers, by eliminating organisms like bacteria, fungus and virus.

There is a big variety of brands present in the markets of removers and disinfectants. The most known brands are CIF, Mistolin and Sonasol. Nevertheless, there is also new brands entering the market, like is the example of UHU, and we can also find different private labels.

The cleaning products are sold in supermarkets and hypermarkets, groceries stores, service areas, do-it-yourself (DIY) stores and stores that are specialized in cleaning. These products can also be purchased online, on the website of the different supermarkets and hypermarkets insignias, and, also, on delivery apps, such as Uber Eats and Glovo.

Factors like sustainability and security are very accountable by brands and clients in this product category. In terms of sustainability, there are some eco-friendly innovations in terms of the composition of the product itself and its packaging. In the security point of view, every cleaning product has some advice, instructions and alerts for their correct utilization, and, besides that, there is the child proof system, that consists in a package design to prevent tampering or opening by children.

3. Literature review

In order to understand the background and purchase habits in this study, we are going to deepen the theorical knowledge concerning the consumer decision making, the purchase context and its motivations. Taking in account the product category under analysis in this study, we will also focus on the habits of purchase and its utilization in the household.

Regarding the consumption behaviour, we are going to develop concepts concerning the brand loyalty and satisfaction, and how these concepts interact with each other; the motivations for choosing sustainable products, since sustainability is a factor that has been gaining importance next to consumers and consequently in the way the cleaning products are presented to the customer; and, finally, the media consumption habits concerning the characteristics of the consumer. Additionally, having in consideration the context analysed in this study, we will also develop the effect that the Covid-19 had on the consumer behaviour.

Lastly, in the post purchase we are going to focus on the theorical aspects regarding the share of experience by the consumers about their use of brands and products.

3.1. Background and Purchase Habits

3.1.1. Consumer Decision Making

Solomon et al. (2016) characterised the decision-making process as the amount of effort that goes into the decision each time it must be made. Consumer decision-making is a central part of consumer behaviour, but the way we evaluate and choose products varies widely, depending on different factors such as the degree of novelty or the risk related to the decision.

According to Solomon et al. (2016), there are three different types of decision-making by the consumer. In the cognitive decision-making, the consumer gathers as much information as possible about a given product, balancing all the alternatives. In this type of decision-making, the consumer processes the information analytically and sequentially using roles of logic. The habitual decision-making perspective reflects impulsive purchases results from factors such as surrounding characteristics, which means that the level involvement by the consumer is low. Lastly, the affective decision-making that

relies on an experimental system of cognition that processes information more holistically and in parallel, and besides that, there is a need to measure affective responses.

A cognitive purchase decision is the outcome of a series of stages that results in the selection of one product over its competitors. In that regard, Solomon et al. (2016) presents us five different stages that take part in that process. The first one is problem recognition, that refers to the moment when the consumer realises that he/she must take some action. This recognition may occur due to a current possession malfunction or perhaps because there is a desire for something new. After the consumer recognizes the problem and considers it as sufficiently important to take some action, he/she begins the process of information search. In this step, the consumer can use internal sources, such as his/her own memory and knowledge about the product concerned, or external sources, like the opinion of friends and relatives or some feedback shared on the internet.

In the third step, the consumer proceeds to the evaluation of the alternatives, that are the options a person considers in his/hers evoked set. These different alternatives, in order to take part in the evoked set, have some characteristics in common and are perceived as similar. Eventually, the consumer will have to make a decision, and, in order for that to happen, he/she will use one of the decision rules. There are two groups of decision rules: the compensatory rules, where the consumer makes a more exhaustive analysis, comparing the pros and the cons of each one of the alternatives; and non-compensatory rules, where the consumer eliminates the alternatives when they don't match one of his requirements. At the end, once the consumer makes a choice, he engages in the post purchase evaluation to determinate if it was a good or a bad choice, what will influence the process the next time the problem occurs.

3.1.2. The Effect of the Family Structure in Consumption

Based on the words of Solomon et al. (2016), the family's needs and expenditures are affected by factors such as the number of elements (children and adults both included), their ages, and whether one, two or more adults are employed.

Couples with children generally have higher expenses because they don't spend money just on the "basics" such as food and utilities bills. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom estimate that the costs of keeping a teenager in the style to which they aspire costs around to £66,000 per year. A study conducted by Bingham (2015) estimates that

the costs of getting a child from birth to the age of 21 is approaching a total amount of £230,000. Adding to that, it's easy to conclude that a recently married couple makes very different expenditures compared with a couple with young children, who in turn are quite different from a couple with children in college, and so on.

There are two types of decisions made by families (Lackman & Lanasa, 1993). In a consensual purchase decision, the household agrees on the desired purchase, differing only in terms of how it will be achieved. In these circumstances, the family will probably engage in solving the problem and consider alternatives until finding the one that satisfies the group's goals.

Unfortunately, the household decision making tend to be a very complex process, since it involves more than one-person, different tastes and preferences, different expectations, and different investments in the final result. In an accommodative purchase decision, group members have different preferences or priorities and cannot agree on a purchase that will satisfy the minimum expectations of all involved. Bargaining, coercion, compromise, and the wielding of are all strategies that are likely to be used to achieve agreement on what to buy or who gets to use it.

Beyond the two previous families' decisions-types mentioned, there are some buying decisions made by only one spouse that are termed autocratic decisions. Men, for instance had sole responsibility for selecting a car, while most decorating choices fell to women. Other decisions, such as holiday destinations, are made together; these are known as syncratic decisions (Solomon et al., 2016). As the couple's education increases, decisions are more likely to be made together (Crispel, 1995).

3.1.3. The Role of the Brand in the Purchasing Decision

Brand is the most valuable asset for any company and has been widely recognized as an essential reason for consumer choice which serves as a tool for consumers to check the differentiation of the products and their uniqueness whereby it enrich consumers trust and confidence in facilitating their decision-making process which alleviate some of the problems associated with their experience and credence qualities (Aaker, 1991; Chung, Ng & Luk, 2013; Emari, Jafari & Mogaddam, 2012; Huang & Sarigollu, 2011; Kremer & Viot, 2012).

Brands have more than just a practical product value; brands also offer symbolic value as they create a form of identity for the consumer and support self-expressive goals (Chernev, Hamilton & Gal, 2011; He, Li & Harris, 2012). Brands are a marketing tool to create experiences through relationships and attachments for consumers, both in a private and in a social context. (Schmitt, Brakus & Zarantonello, 2015).

Consumers tend to buy brands that are already known because they feel safe with something known. It can be said that the brand is a guarantee from the manufacturer regarding their quality. Therefore, the brand must be created in accordance with the desired image. Brand must have a positive meaning. Besides that, it also describes the philosophy of the company (Irawan, 2014).

One of the factors that affect most the consumer's purchasing decision is the Brand Equity (Çifci et al.,2016, Evanita & Trinanda, 2019). Brand equity is a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a customer. The major asset categories are brand awareness; perceived quality; brand associations; and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Brand equity is associated with known brand names, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other assets such as patents and trademarks (Çifci et al.,2016). Brand Equity is the value of a brand for the customer, therefore, what determines the height or low of Brand Equity is the customer. The company's position here is to create a strategy to achieve the desired Brand Equity value (Evanita & Trinanda, 2019).

The value of a brand is perceived in the mind of consumer, which is reflected on their responses, in other words, brand equity can be measured through observing the ways consumers behave and act in the purchasing process of a specific product (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Brand preference might be relevant to the extent to which the consumers prefer a specific product to others due to the impacts of its brand name on consumers evaluations (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003) and purchase intention (Tolba & Hassan, 2009) demonstrating how eagerly the consumers want to make an actual purchase.

3.1.4. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is represented by the value that it adds to a product or service and it is a useful tool to create a temporary stimulus on the sales of a brand by making consumers a special offer. One of the main goals of using sales promotion is to stimulate

an interest in the consumers. In turn, this possible interest can be converted into purchases which leads to an increase in sales (Karthikeyan & Panchanatham, 2013).

The main advantages which companies seek to achieve through promotions apart from the immediate boost of sales, are retaining customers, introducing new products, encouraging brand switching, conquering competitive products, maintaining sales of seasonal products and category expansion. Nevertheless, some researchers feel that their effectiveness is limited in the sense that the sales increment induced by various promotional activity are only temporary and tend to bounce back to their previous level once the sales promotion campaign is taking off (Goyal, 2019). On other hand, there are a couple of disadvantages pointed out to sales promotions, such as the decrease of brand loyalty, the decrease of quality perception, and the increase of price sensitivity (Keller, 1998).

According to Nathwani (2017), price discount is the most influential and preferred tool, once is the one that attracts more consumers to change the brand. Moreover, according to Karthikeyan and Panchanatham (2013), free gift offers, saver packs offers, sweepstakes and price discounts offers are the most dominant promotional techniques. Thus, it is possible to verify that, in relation to the two studies analyzed by the authors mentioned before, price discounts are the technique that most influences consumers.

Goyal (2019) concluded that consumers accelerate their purchase when in it comes to price promotions. Nevertheless, on the other hand, price promotions may undermine future choice by lowering consumer's perceptions of brand quality (Dodson, Tybout & Sternthal, 1978), by training consumers to wait for promotions (Mela, Jedidi & Bowman, 1998), or by lowering consumers' price expectations for the brand (Monroe, 1971). Therefore, in order to take the most out of this technique, managers should make decisions related to promotion depth and how to frame the discount (Della Bitta, Kent & Monroe, 1981).

3.1.5. Online Shopping

Online shopping is the consumer purchase process of products or services from any online seller (Mastercard Worldwide Insight, 2008). Online shopping is not limited by time, space and place, and thus greatly improves shopping efficiency and satisfaction (Zhang, Ji, Wang & Chen, 2017). It enables the acquisition of more information, choice

of products and prices, more extensive choice, convenience, and easier finding of anything on the Internet. Online shopping also provides greater satisfaction to today's consumers seeking convenience and speed (Yu, Ha, Choi & Rho, 2005).

According to Rausch, Baier and Wening (2021), the online shopping attributes which are more important to customers during their purchase decision are related to the shipping, such as shipping fees, shipping speed and return policy. Besides that, the availability and the channels to contact customer service also play a major role (Cao, Aijan & Hong, 2018).

Nevertheless, the one big problem associated with online shopping is that consumers have limited access to real products, and therefore shopping online carries a greater risk of getting unsatisfactory products than offline. In that sense, online reviews, especially text content, help customers dealing with this problem and provide them an effective way to know the product quality (Chen & Xie, 2008).

3.1.6. Cleaning products' Purchase and Utilization

There is not much literature regarding the purchase and utilization of cleaning products. Nevertheless, a study from Kovacs, Small, Davidson and Fischhoff (1997) suggests that gender is a very important factor in terms of the purchase and the utilization of this product category, being women the ones who buy and use them the most. Besides that, the female sex is also the one with the most protective care when using this kind of products and the kitchen is the house division where these products are used the most. The same study also suggests that the most relevant factors for consumers when purchasing cleaning products are the effectiveness, the environment safe, the odour, and the price.

More recently, a study from Bearth, Miesler and Siegrist (2017) concluded that the most considered attributes when shopping cleaning products are the instructions of use, and product names and brands. On the other hand, the attribute less relevant to the consumer is the advertisement.

3.2. Consumption Behaviour

3.2.1. Brand Loyalty and Satisfaction

The central role of marketing strategies is the development and maintenance of customer brand loyalty, especially in markets with strong competition, great unpredictability, and decrease in product differentiation (Nawaz & Usman, 2011). Brand loyalty is a conventional marketing idea that focuses on developing a long-term consumer brand relationship. In addition, it has been employed to measure brand equity and successful marketing strategies (Knox & Walker, 2003).

Brand loyalty is defined as a *"deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and the marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour"* (Oliver, 1999). Customer's loyalty can be developed over time by consistently meeting and exceeding customer's expectations (Kasuma, 2012). The consumer-brand relationship is critical to the building of brand loyalty (Şahin, Zehir & Kitapçı, 2011).

Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). According to Alloza (2008), brand experience can be defined as the perception of the consumers, at every moment of contact they have with the brand, whether it is in the brand images projected in advertising, during the first personal contact, or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive. Brand experience is created when customers use the brand; talk to others about the brand; seek out brand information, promotions, and events, and so on (Ambler et al., 2002). Brand experiences lead to brand loyalty, active referral of the brand and increased profitability for the brand (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Brand experiences encourage loyalty by creating emotional connections through an engaging, compelling and consistent context (Şahin et al., 2011).

Brand satisfaction is based on the fulfilment and expectations of consumers for the brand (Fang, 2017). Brand satisfaction is where consumers feel that the brand is in accordance with their wishes, starting from the products or services that the brand provides to consumers, so that satisfaction arises using the brand in the minds of

consumers (Mahmood, Qureshi, Huraira & Mahmood, 2019; Susanti, Rafika & Melinda, 2021). Brand satisfaction is defined according to Chinomona, Mahlangu and Pooe (2013) as cumulative satisfaction where overall consumer evaluation is based on total purchases and consumer experiences with products or services from the brand.

Johnson (2001) declared that the customer satisfaction can be measured through two ways. Customer satisfaction can either be evaluated by the feelings, attitudes and beliefs towards products, services, or past experiences with the brand. Brand satisfaction that occurs continuously will create brand loyalty (Şahin et al., 2011). Customers who feel more satisfied will clearly have high loyalty to the brand. One of the main components of brand loyalty is consumer brand satisfaction, with a preferred brand (Marist, Yulianti & Najib, 2014).

Building and maintaining relationships with customers is of great value to the brands because it results in brand loyalty of customers (Heffernan, O'Neill, Travaglione & Droulers, 2008). Loyalty programs do not just help to create a competitive advantage but also bring in a bundle of benefits for the brand. The most important thing of the consumer's loyalty is trust, availability to act, without counting costs and benefits gained from the commitment, repurchase and proportion in conducting the repurchase (Shariff, Setyawati & Anindita, 2012).

3.2.2. Sustainable Products

As the years go by, more and more human beings are rethinking the way they consume and having more in account the current state of the environment in their purchase decisions. Nonetheless, there is a preconceived idea that sustainable products are frequently more expensive, therefore, socio-demographic characteristics, such as income, gender and age of the consumers have always been a factor moulding their behaviour (Drozdenko, Jansen & Coelho, 2011). There is an explicit relationship between income and environmental quality as it is presumed that the high-income group has the potential to buy sustainable products (Junaedi, 2012; Muhammad, Fathelrahman & Ullah, 2015).

When it comes to everyday products, consumers resort to simple heuristics in order to help them make a decision with the smallest effort possible (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1990). These simplifying heuristics can result on choosing the product with the

lowest price, or a product from a trusted brand or even just repeat a previous pleasant choice.

Consumers usually don't act according to their believes. In matter of fact, it has been reported that there exists a current gap between consumers' environmental concerns and attitudes and their choice of everyday products (Barr, 2006; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

Moreover, some authors found that highly involved consumers' everyday product choices lean towards to be more consistent with their sustainable attitudes than less involved consumers' choices (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2009).

In what regards the cleaning products, Bearth and Siegrist (2019) found that consumers perceived eco-friendly cleaning products as a safer option relative to the health and risk issues associated with this type of products, even though the truth is that the product being more sustainable or not has no influence on this aspect.

3.2.3. Media Consumption Habits

Media is an integral and taken-for-granted part of everyday life. People develop and maintain strong patterns of habitual media use, and distinct groups of people may develop patterns with completely different media than others do. When certain behaviour is performed regularly in stable circumstances (such as reading a newspaper at breakfast) and for a certain purpose (such as information or entertainment), it eventually turns into a habit (Ghersett & Westlund, 2019). According to Wood, Quinn and Kashy (2002), the slight majority of all media use is habitual, and once these patterns and routines are established, changing them may be difficult, and consequently new habits may be hard to adopt (Graybiel & Smith 2014).

Older generations developed their media habits when traditional media, like television and newspapers, were at their prime, and have largely persisted in maintaining the same habits, whereas younger generations have formed media habits in a digital mediascape (Westlund & Weibull 2013). The same conclusion was reach in the study of Ndedzi (2018), that also added gender and social class as two important factors that differentiate the use of media. In terms of gender, the news consumption both online and offline is led by men, while women read more books. Meanwhile, people with higher social-economic status tend to use more digital media once it is easier for them to access to this type of media.

3.2.4. Consumption Behaviour and the Covid-19 pandemic

According to Egger, Komárková, Egerová and Mičík (2021), at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, consumers displayed stockpiling behaviours that significantly deviate from their usual shopping behaviour. A further consequence of the lower accessibility of store premises, combined with consumers' greater health concerns, was an immediate increase in demand for alternative distribution channels.

Pantano, Pizzi, Scarpi and Dennis (2020) point out that consumers reviewed their shopping habits and, at the same time, discovered benefits from products and services which they had never used before. Futher, these authors noted that unexpected regulations imposing social distancing had a vast impact on consumers' favoured channel for shopping. For example, while online grocery shopping has witnessed stable though limited growth in the last decade (Harris, Dall'Olmo Rilley, Rilley & Hand, 2017), it has significantly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis (Pantano et al., 2020).

A study from Accenture (2020) states that consumers were deeply concerned about the impact of COVID-19, both from a health and an economic perspective. The findings of the mentioned research showed that purchases were centred on the most basic needs, people shopped more consciously, bought locally, and were embracing digital commerce. According to Egger et al. (2021), the main conditioning in the consumption behaviour during the pandemic crisis was the fear caused by the context, especially when associated with health. The decisions for new purchases during this period were based in the quality, availability, and convenience of the purchase.

As consumers begun to cope with the pandemic crisis, they were responding differently to the actions of brands. According to psychological contract theory, consumers form psychological contracts with the brands they patronize based on implicit promises that they believe the brand has made (Kirk, Ray & Wilson, 2013). It is possible that brands with a high socially responsible positioning (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020; He & Harris, 2020) may therefore be particularly subject to punishment by consumers if they are perceived to have betrayed their positioning promises during the pandemic. For example, in a recent study from Edelman (2020) of 12,000 consumers worldwide, two-thirds of consumers reported that their future purchase decisions will be strongly influenced by how brands respond to the pandemic. In fact, one-third of respondents had

already actively switched from a brand based on what they perceived to be an inappropriate response to the pandemic crisis.

3.3. Post Purchase Behaviour

Post purchase behaviour is that part of consumer behaviour whereat the consumers actually consume the products/services and evaluate their performance (Assael, 2004). Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) state that there can be three possible evaluations: a neutral feeling, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction. A neutral feeling is experienced if the performance matches the expectations while satisfaction is experienced if the performance exceeds the expectations. On the other hand, dissatisfaction is caused if the performance is below the expectations.

It is hypothesized that customers' satisfaction has a positive association with their repurchase intentions (Fang, Chiu & Wang, 2011). But repurchase intention is not limited only to product or the brand, Tsai and Huang (2007) have also theorized that satisfaction of customers also determine their patronization of the purchase point. In addition to these, recommendation is also one of the crucial facets of post purchase behaviour. In sum, there are three types of behaviours when the consumer has a positive post purchase experience: repurchase intentions regarding the product or the brand, repurchase intentions regarding the purchase point and recommendation to the others (Kumar, Vohra & Dangi, 2016).

3.3.1. The Role of Word-of-mouth

In the current days, consumers are inundated with WOM (Word-of-month), online and offline. There are currently more than four billion consumers with access to the Internet (International Telecommunication Union, 2019) where blogs, review sites, and social media platforms expose them to hundreds of millions of reviews, comments, and Tweets (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019). Offline, consumers converse with others on a daily basis about different types of products and services (Anderson, 1998; Berger, 2014). Correspondingly, companies have allocated increasingly greater pro-portions of their marketing budgets to WOM initiatives (Moorman, 2014).

WOM has a huge impact on consumer behaviour. Social talk generates over 3.3 billion brand impressions each day (Keller & Libai, 2009). Interpersonal communication

increases product awareness and persuades people to try things (Van den Bulte & Wuyts, 2009). A study by Bughin, Doogan and Vetvik (2010) suggest that WOM is the primary factor behind 20% to 50% of all purchasing decisions and generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising.

According to Berger (2014), consumer conversations are driven by two primary motivations: those associated with the receiver of the WOM, and those associated with the sender. WOM enables receivers to, for example, seek advice and resolve problems, and it affords senders opportunities to impress and persuade others.

4. Methodology

4.1. Conceptual Framework

The study that is going to be developed in this dissertation was inspired in the model of Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2016), having then evolved to its own model applied to the context of FMCG. The model aims to study the background and the purchase habits, the consumption behaviour, and the post purchase behaviour.

The option by the model of Solomon et al. (2016) is explained by the fact that we were kooking for a model that was consensual among the literature and generalized. The model itself refers to the issues related to the purchase and the post-purchase activities. This model is divided in three different phases: Antecedent Stages, Purchase Environment, and Post Purchase Process. In each phase, there are different factors that have an effect in the decisions, behaviours, and the experience of the consumer.



Figure 1 - Issues related to the purchase and the post-purchase activities; Source: Solomon et al. (2016)

Based on the model previously presented, was formed the conceptual framework of this study. This model is divided in five topics: General Context of FMCG Purchasing,

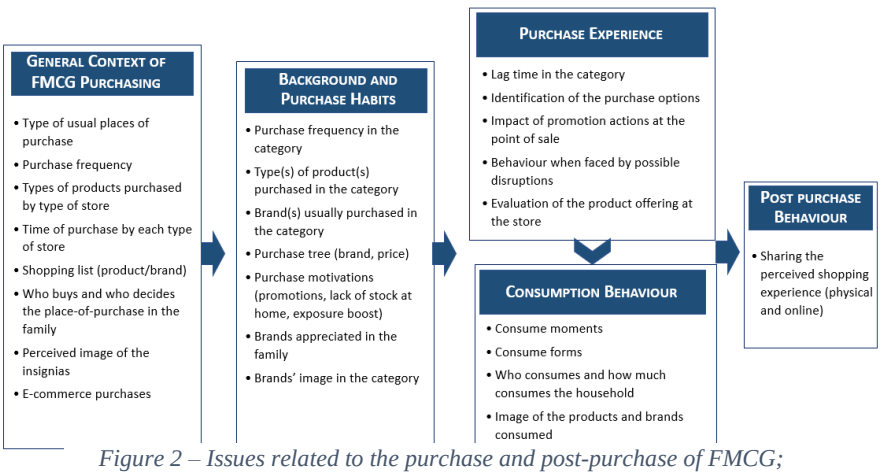


Figure 2 – Issues related to the purchase and post-purchase of FMCG; Source: Adapted from Solomon et al. (2016)

Background and Purchase Habits, Purchase Experience, Consumption Behaviour and Post Purchase Behaviour. Assigned to which one of these topics are different factors to be investigated in the study.

In what regards to the cleaning products, two of the topics that are present in the model above were not accountable: The General Context of FMCG Purchasing, once the aim of this study is to analyse the consumption habits and behaviours regarding a product category, so it isn't relevant to this study to take in account a topic that concerns the FMCG purchased as an overall view; and The Purchase Experience, because in this study the consumers were not interviewed and observed during the purchase of their cleaning products at the point of sale, as it was the case of other categories of products addressed in the collaborative study.

4.2. Research Questions

In this dissertation, we will try to answer to the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the general context of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) purchase?
- RQ2: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the cleaning products purchase?
- RQ3: What is the purchase experience of the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- RQ4: What are the consumption behaviours related to the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- RQ5: What are the post-purchase behaviours related to the cleaning products during and after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?

4.3. In Situ Methodology

In order to collect data to this study, it was decided to conduct a qualitative research, through the In Situ methodology. According Herbst and Coldweel (2004), the qualitative research is based on words, feelings, emotions, sounds and other non-

numerical/unquantifiable elements. Having this in account, more than trying to understand the habits and preferences of the consumer, these study aims on understanding the reasoning and motivations that lead each person to take a certain choice or perform a certain behaviour.

In the words of Edvardsson, Kristensson, Magnusson and Sundström (2011), *"Insitu therefore refers to information from customers/ users that originate from a real-life, value co-creation situation; the information is thus created and documented in the use situation as or just after it occurs"*. Based on these words, we affirm that in this type of qualitative methodology, the researcher goes directly to the environment of the consumer in order to better understand its habits and attitudes through a non-directive interview and a close observation. The In Situ methodology has the advantage compared to qualitive methodologies, like the focus group, to get more truthful and genuine insights, because the interviews are taken place in a scenario where the interviewed are more comfortable and familiar with.

In that sense, the gathering of information was conducted by a collaborative study that featured the participation of six master students within the scope of a project of Marketing Futurecast Lab, oriented by Professor Joaquim Rodrigues, Professor Pedro Dionisio and Professor Pedro Esteves. The aim of this project was to study what would be the new habits of purchase and consume after the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in different categories of products, including the cleaning products. The choice of the categories of products addressed in this study was made based on the product category represented by the different manufactured brands that shown interest in the project and in its conclusions.

4.4. Sample of the survey

In this study were interviewed a total of 52 families. The selection of each one of these families was made firstly by the professors who were orientated the project, and then by the students who were participating in the project as investigators. To this selection were taken in account four different criteria: type of household (couple without children, couple with school age children, single parent with school age children, and others), location (six geographic sample areas: Grande Porto, Interior Norte, Litoral Centro, Grande Lisboa, Alentejo, and Algarve), retail insignia where the family goes

shopping (Continente, Pingo Doce, Intermaché, Auchan, Lidl, Minipreço, others retail insignias, and local commerce) and social class (upper middle class, middle class, and lower middle class), in order to have a diversify sample which represented the Portuguese society. The high class and low were left out of this study, because in the first case the pandemic was presumably less impactful, and the second one it was not interesting for the manufacturer brands to approach this class in the study.

In the following bar graphs, we look how the sample of this study distributes in what regards the different criteria mentioned in the last paragraph:

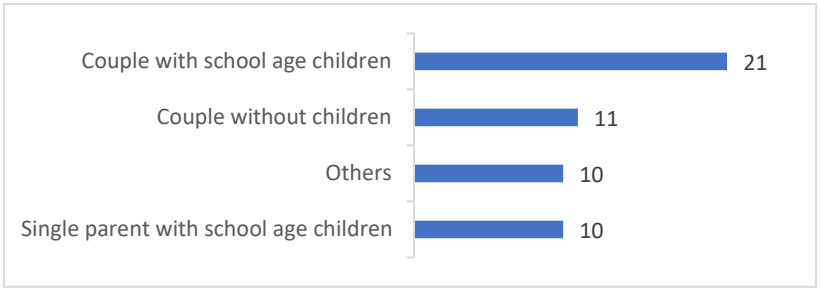


Figure 3 - Distribution of the sample by household type

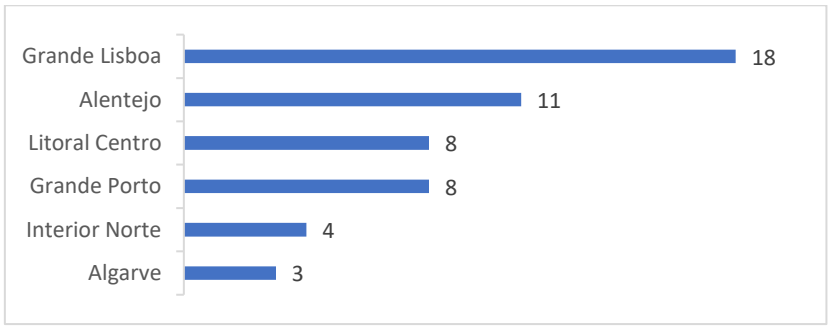


Figure 4 - Distribution of the sample by location

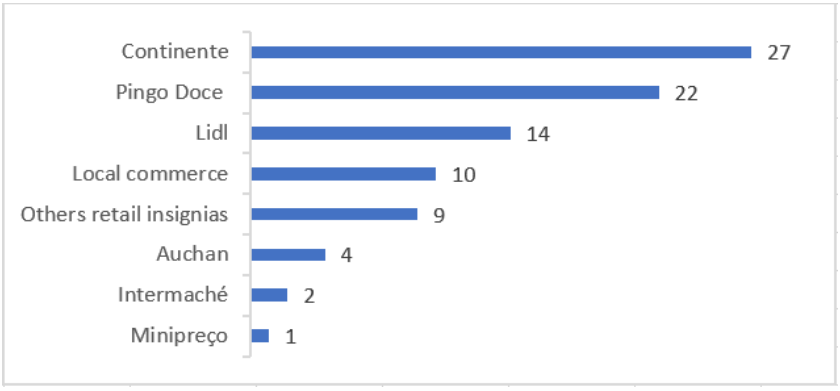


Figure 5 - Distribution of the sample by retail insignia where each family goes shopping

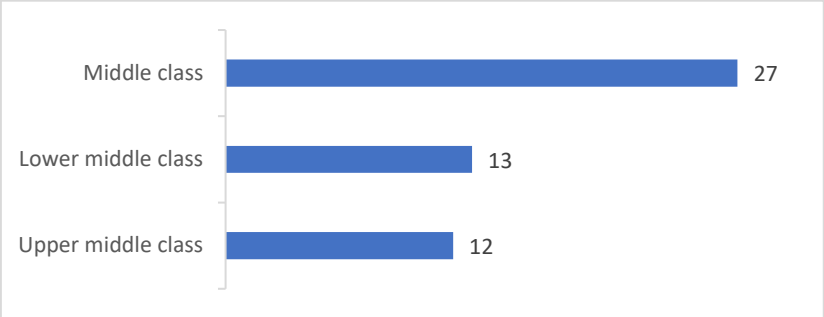


Figure 6 - Distribution of the sample by social class

4.5. Data collection

The collaborative study introduced previously in staying two nights in the house of each family, including dinner time, which allowed us to observe pattern behaviors and to have non directive interviews with all family members, about their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors regarding pandemic and pos pandemic period. Every family that participated in this study was rewarded with a 75€ voucher for grocery shopping at their favourite supermarket. This methodology consisted

In the first interview, the investigator asked most of the questions that belonged to a previously designed script, once the objective of the second interview was just to collect the information that was missing from the first time. For this process to work out correctly, it was crucial that the investigator transcribed the data recorded in audio during the first interview in order to know what he or she would have to ask in the next interview. During these interviews, it was crucial that the investigators lead the interview taking into consideration the natural flow of the conversation and always making sure families would not feel pressured to answer the questions. After the second interview, the investigator should transcribe, once again, the interview in order to complete the data collected.

Based on the conceptual framework of this study, were developed the following research questions divided by three different moments: the purchase, the utilization and the post-utilization. It's also important to highlight that the cleaning groups were divided in two groups of products: the removers and the disinfectants, however the questions asked for the two groups were the same and followed the two previous models presented.

4.6. Data Analysis

In this study is going to be developed two types of analysis: a quantitative analysis and a qualitative analysis. In the context of the quantitative analysis, we will look in detail to data that concerns consumers' preferences, which type of behaviours they perform and where they use each one of the products. The qualitative analysis will help us analyse the set of comments that were collected during the interviews and will contribute to the analysis of the motivations and of the feelings that the consumer has relative to a certain brand, product, or behaviour.

In that sense, firstly will be joined all the information collected through the interviews related to the cleaning products in a word file in order to display all the information together in a document and to facilitate the future analysis. Posteriorly, in an Excel sheet will be organized all the quantitative information collected from the different families, in order to have a better understanding of what are the preferences, behaviours and utilizations more common in the Portuguese families in what regards to the cleaning products.

In order to analyse the comments made by the interviewed, it´s going to be created an Excel file, where the different comments will be divided in the different topics of conversation. Then we will try look for tendences in these comments and will also examine the sentiments that the interviewees have when approaching the different subjects of our analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

As it was stated by Donthu and Gustafsson (2020), due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world was dealing with a crisis that affected enormous of aspects of our society and daily-routine, with huge social and economic consequences. As consequence of this virus, there were some contextual changes and an emotional impact that had an effect in the consumer (Theodoridou, Tsakiridou, Kalogeras & Mattas, 2019). This type of context tends to modify patterns of consumer purchase behaviour in the long term as well, and these modifications could become, with time, consumers' new habits and new preferences in terms of brands or products (Arens & Hamilton, 2018).

Being that said, we decided to analyse the modifications and new habits gained related to the general context of the FMCG purchase, and, more specifically, to the purchase experience, to the consumption and to the post-purchase of the cleaning products, that occurred in the two lockdown periods that took place in Portugal. These periods corresponded precisely to moments when the impact of Covid-19 pandemic was bigger in our society and daily-routine, since there were a lot of restrictions on our freedom which forced us to be confined to our houses and didn´t allow us to be with people outside of our household.

After that we want to understand those modifications and the new habits gained during the lockdowns, and which of them were maintained after those periods.

5.1. Cleaning Products Contextualization

5.1.1. Cleaning products preferences

In what regards the two cleaning products under analysis, the removers and the disinfectants, only three families among the 52 that were interviewed during the study indicated that they don't use any of these types of products.

If we take a closer analysis to each one of the types of products, there are more families that affirmed to use the removers than the ones that use the disinfectants.

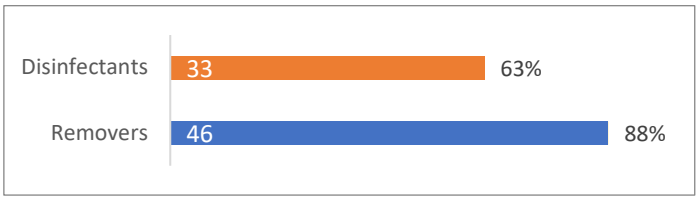


Figure 7 - Number of families that uses the removers or the disinfectants among all the universe of families interviewed

The main reason that the majority of the families presented not to use at least one of these products is that they preferred to use bleach, since it is a product which can be used to clean more different zones and parts of the house, and they are satisfied with the results they have obtained using it.

Regarding to the preferences concerning the type of remover or disinfectants, and, also, the number of removers and disinfectants that are used by each one of the families interviewed, we can find that information in the following graphics:

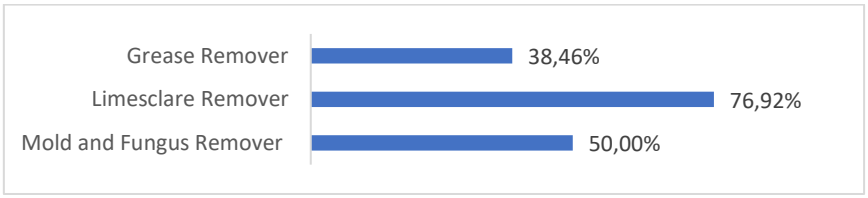


Figure 8 - Percentage of utilization of each one of the types of removers among all the universe of families interviewed



Figure 9 - Percentage of the number of removers used among all the universe of families interviewed

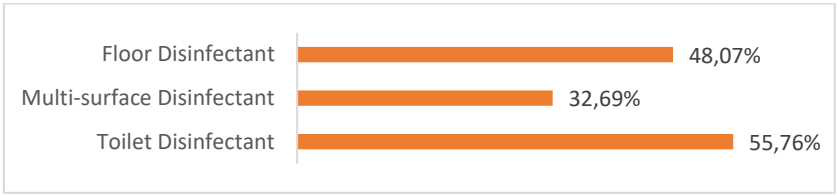


Figure 10 - Percentage of utilization of each one of the types of disinfectants among all the universe of families interviewed



Figure 11 - Percentage of the number of disinfectants used among all the universe of families interviewed

In what regards the different brands, based on comments made during the interviews, we can conclude that the consumers have a very highly image of brands like *CIF* and *Sonasol*, seeing them as top brands in the market with a great level of quality. Regarding *UHU*, the big majority of the families interviewed just knew the brand because of its glue products and, as consequence of that, they shown a bit distrust to its cleaning products, since they were not aware of their existence.

"CIF and Sonasol are well-known brands, they are always making new advertisements and launching new products"

Woman, 26 years old, scientific researcher, Covilhã

"UHU it is glue, I only remember the glue"

Woman, 59 years old, probation officer, Leiria

5.2. General Context of the FMCG Purchase

5.2.1. Covid-19 impact in the general context of the FMCG purchase

In the context of the purchase of FMCG, a lot of the families (81%) interviewed affirmed that they changed some of their habits during the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

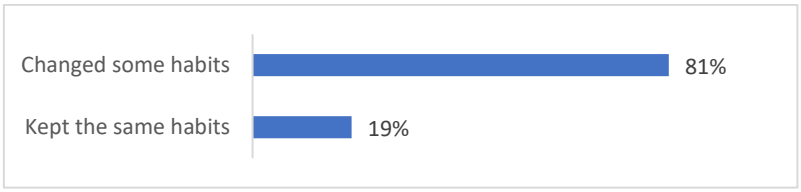


Figure 12 - Changes in the general context of the FMCG purchase during the lockdowns

The change that occurred most during this period was going less often to supermarkets and hypermarkets (referred by 50% of the families that changed some habits), opting to make larger purchases compared to what they did before.

"We avoided as much as possible, we went once and bought everything right away"

Woman, 19 years old, student, Grândola

However, there was also a small number of families that affirmed that they went to supermarkets and/or hypermarkets more frequently with emergence of the pandemic situation.

"We didn't buy many things at once, so we went more often, because we always ate at home."

Man, 50 years old, engineer, Lisbon

There were others changes of behaviour mention by a small number of families like avoiding the most popular schedules and just one household member going to supermarkets and/or hypermarkets.

"We chose times when there were possibly less people. There were times when I would turn to Continente, look at the parking, and see a lot of people in the queue, and I decided to go back home."

Man, 48 years old, teacher, Grândola

"In a perspective of risk management, we agreed that from that time on, my wife would always go shopping, so that it would always be the same person leaving the house"

Man, 52 years old, manager, Estoril

Specially in the Portuguese larger urban areas, in other words, the regions of Grande Lisboa and Grande Porto, there was a significant number of families that started or increased the online FMCG purchases. Only in the Grande Lisboa, there was a very clear tendence to have preferred to purchase in stores near to their home.

"We started to buy practically everything online, which we didn't do before"

Woman, 38 years old, student, Algés

"We always went to places closer to here"

Woman, 50 years old, engineer, Lisbon

After the lockdowns, most of families that had changed some behaviours kept those changes, but the difference between the percentage of families that kept the changes and the percentage of families who went back to the behaviours prior to the pandemic is quite small.



Figure 13 - Maintenance of the behavioural changes from the lockdowns in the FMCG purchase after the lockdowns

The new habits gained during the lockdowns were maintain specially in the families from the Grande Lisboa region (87% of these families kept the changes), and from the upper-middle class (82% of these families kept the changes). There was also a larger acceptance by the new habits regarding the FMCG purchase in the families constituted by a couple with school age children class (75% of these families kept the changes).

All the families that, during the lockdowns, decided to purchase in stores near to their homes kept this new habit after lockdowns. Regarding to the online FMCG purchase, it was kept by 60% of the families that started or increased their online purchases.

On the other hand, the new behaviour that had less acceptance after the lockdowns was going less often to supermarkets and hypermarkets. This habit was rejected by 62% of the families who had adopted after the lockdowns.

To sum up, most of the families interviewed affirmed that they changed some of their habits during the two lockdowns. The change that occurred most was going less often to supermarkets and hypermarkets, opting to make larger purchases compared to what they did before the pandemic. In the regions of Grande Lisboa and Grande Porto, there was a significant number of families that started or increased the online FMCG purchases. Moreover, in the Grande Lisboa region, there was a very clear tendence by the interviewed to prefer to purchase in stores near to their address.

After the lockdowns, most of families that had changed some habits, by a small margin, kept the changes that they had made during the two lockdowns. All the families that, during the lockdowns, decided to purchase in stores near to their address, kept this new habit after lockdowns. On the other hand, the habit that had less acceptance after the lockdowns was going less often to the supermarkets and the hypermarkets.

5.3. Purchase of the Cleaning Products

5.3.1. Covid-19 impact in the purchase of removers

Starting by the purchase of removers, our findings tell us that on this product the impact of the pandemic was not felt much, since just 13% of the families affirmed that they changed their purchasing behaviour during the period in question. Among those families that change their purchasing behaviour, five of them admitted that they purchased more removers during the lockdowns, while just one family told us that they purchased less removers during that period.

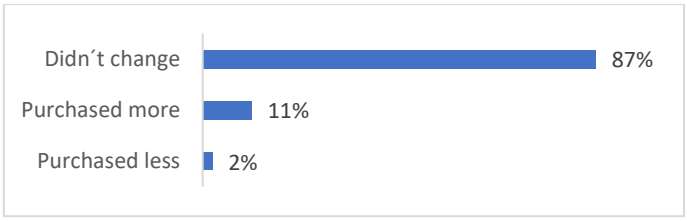


Figure 14 - Changes in the purchase habits of removers during the lockdowns

One fact that is very interesting to notice is that the families in which these changes happened, five out of six are constituted by a couple with school age children. From another point view, the families who purchased more removers belong to the middle and upper-middle social classes, while the family that purchased less removers during the lockdowns belongs to the lower-middle social class.

Among the families who started to use more removers during the lockdowns, three of them pointed out the fact of spending too much time at home, what led to dirty the house more, as the main reason to increasing the purchase of removers. The other two families felt necessity to start using the mold and fungus remover based on recommendations made to them by friends.

"It ended faster, because if we are more time at home, it ends up getting dirty a lot more"

Man, 45 years old, financial advisor and insurance intermediary, Maia

"Here it works mainly on the basis of recommendations from others"

Man, 46 years old, market analyst and teacher, Alfragide

After the lockdowns, all the families kept their behaviour in terms of the purchase of removers, except for two families. One was among the families that purchased more removers during the lockdown, and which affirmed that went back to the same purchase habits that had before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The other one, it was a family that did not change its purchase behaviour during the lockdowns, but after the first interview that took place with this family, they were very curious to try the mold and fungus remover. At the second interview, they seemed satisfied with the product and had the intention to keep purchasing it.

5.3.2. Covid-19 impact in the purchase of disinfectants

Now, we will talk about what happened with the disinfectants. In this product, 45% of the families admitted that they changed their purchase habits during the lockdowns. This means that the number of families that changed their purchase behaviour is higher in the disinfectants compared to the removers.



Figure 15 - Changes in the purchase habits of disinfectants during the lockdowns

The main reason that families presented to justify the changes in their purchase was the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic (87%). Some of these families bought this product for the first time during this period, once the disinfection of the houses and their furniture was seen as an important measure to protect the families' health against the pandemic, since it was recommended by the health national authorities.

"In the beginning of the lockdowns, I took the trouble to buy disinfectants, because I was worried about it [Covid-19 pandemic] and I was disinfecting everything"

Woman, 45 years old, accountant, Leça da Palmeira

As it was mentioned about the removers, there was openness to adopt new behaviours in families of middle and upper-middle social class, and in families constituted by a couple with school age kids.

Contrary to the removers, it is possible to identify some tendences that differentiate the behaviour of the consumers of the different regions of Portugal present in this study. While in Alentejo, Grande Lisboa, Grande Porto and Litoral Centro, there were more consumers that changed their behaviours than the ones that kept them, in Algarve and Interior Norte there wasn´t a consumer that had changed their purchase habits.

Compared to the removers, there was a bigger acceptance to keep the changes in terms disinfectants' purchase habits after the lockdowns, since 87% of families affirmed that they had kept their behaviours gained during the two more critical pandemic periods.

There were two families that went back to the purchase behaviour prior to the lockdowns. These two families are from Grande Lisboa and belong to the middle-class. Contrary to majority of the families, they both affirmed that spending more time at home was the main reason to change their behaviours during the lockdowns.

"I think it is like this, during the lockdowns, eventually, we consume a little bit more, because we were spending more time at home, and I think that we cleaned things more regularly"

Woman, 30 years old, student, Porto

In terms of the purchase of the cleaning products, most of the families kept their habits prior the pandemic, however in the disinfectants there was a lot more families that affirmed that had changed their purchase habits during the lockdowns than in the removers. The reason for that is because the disinfectants were seen as way to protect the household from the pandemic.

Most of the families that changed their purchase habits affirmed that they purchased more during the lockdowns. There was more openness to adopt new

behaviours in families from the middle and the upper-middle social class, and in families constituted by a couple with school age kids.

After the lockdowns there was a good level of acceptance to keep the changes in both products, but that acceptance had more expression in the disinfectants.

5.4. Purchase Experience of the Cleaning Products

5.4.1. Covid-19 impact in the purchase experience of cleaning products

In this point there were not a lot of changes being referred during the different interviews, by the different families. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that we can´t ignore. One aspect that displayed a major during the lockdowns, as a motivator to buy cleaning products, and, also as factor that influences the product choice, was the sense of safety sensation against the pandemic situation that the product offers.

"Due to the pandemic situation, we started to buy a lot more"

Woman, 54 years old, informatic technician, Entrocamento

"During the lockdowns, we purchased a lot of disinfectants for prevention"

Woman, 59 years, probation officer, Leiria

After the lockdowns, this factor started to lose some importance in the purchase choice and in the motivation of some consumers. However, at same time, there were several respondents that affirmed to continue to purchase, after the lockdowns, the cleaning products, that they initially bought due to the pandemic situation, because, according to them, it turned out to be a habit that they liked.

Another aspect is that there were ten families that mention that they started or increased the purchase of cleaning products online during the lockdowns. The main reasons for that were the convenience of the process and considering the process more save in terms of the pandemic.

Out of the families that change their behaviour in terms of the online purchase of the cleaning products, 60% of them kept that change afterwards. The main reason

presented by the families that didn't keep this habit was that they preferred the purchase experience physically.

During the lockdowns, the safety sensation against the pandemic situation that the cleaning products offers played a big role in the purchase decision of the consumer, but as a motivator to buy different products. After the lockdowns, this factor started to lose some importance in the purchase choice and in the motivation of some consumers, but at the same time some interviews still purchase those products, because it turned out to be a habit that they liked.

Another change that happened during lockdowns, were people starting to buy more cleaning products online during the pandemic. The main advantages seen were the convenience of the process and the process being more save in terms of the pandemic. After the lockdowns, there was still a very interesting number of families that kept this habit.

5.5. Consumption of the Cleaning Products

5.5.1. Covid-19 impact in the consumption of removers

In terms of the consumption of the removers, there were 20% of families that admitted using more removers compared to what they did before the lockdowns. It is important to state that this percentage is higher than the one related with the increase in the purchase of the removers (10,87%).

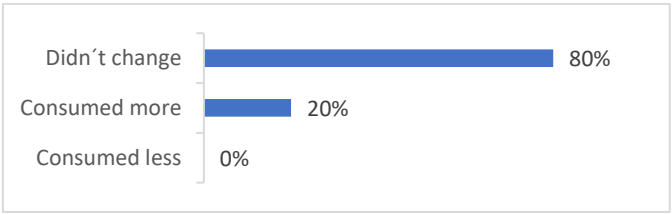


Figure 16 - Changes in the consumption habits of removers during the lockdowns

Although not so notorious as it was in the purchase, but there is a very clear tendence to the increase of the utilization of the removers to happen in families of couples with school children and from the middle and upper-middle social classes.

As well as it was mentioned in the purchase of the removers, there are five families that mentioned that since they spent more time at home during the lockdowns, they started to dirty the house more, and, as consequence of that, they used the removers more. Other reasons pointed out were that there were two families that started using the mold and fungus remover during this period, and the novelty was two families mentioning that they started to clean more their house because of the fear associated with pandemic.

"At the beginning of the lockdown, we started to clean everything. It was a fear that everyone had!"

Woman, 55 years old, teacher, Algés

After the lockdowns, just four of the nine families kept their behaviour in terms of the new habits of purchase of removers. The families that went back to the old habits before the Covid-19 pandemic, four of them started to use more removers because they spent more time at home and the other family started to consume more removers once they felt the need to clean their house more with the arrival of the pandemic.

There was also a family that did not change their behaviour in terms of consumption of the removers, but, after the first interview, they decided to try the mold and fungus remover. When the second interview took place, they were satisfied with the product and affirm their intention to keep using it.

"I was very satisfied in the sense that you can clean small areas in a flat space"

Woman, 49 years, nursery assistant, Grândola

5.5.2. Covid-19 impact in the consumption of disinfectants

Lastly, in relations to the consumption of disinfectants, 52% affirmed that they used more disinfectants during the two lockdowns compared to the times prior to Covid-19 pandemic. Once again, the percentage related to consumption is higher compared to the presented in the purchase. Besides that, there are more changes associated to the disinfectants in terms of the habits of consumption as well.

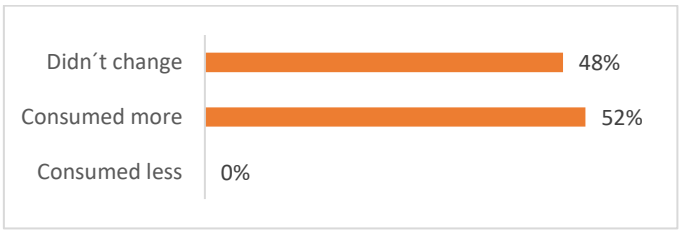


Figure 17 - Changes in the consumption habits of disinfectants during the lockdowns

The two main reasons to use more disinfectants during the lockdowns were the fear of the Covid-19 and cleaning more the house since they spent more time at home.

"I clean everything! I clean the doors, the doorknobs, the floor, the fridge… everything that was a furniture, everything that I touched I cleaned!"

Woman, 44 years old, marketeer, Porto

"We cleaned more because we spent more time at home, not because of Covid-19"

Woman, 38 years old, marketeer, Miraflores

Like it was mentioned in the purchase of the disinfectants, there was also openness to adopt new behaviours in families constituted by a couple with school age kids, and from the regions of Alentejo, Grande Lisboa, Grande Porto and Litoral Centro. However, in terms of the social classes, the lower-middle social class was the one that changed their habits the most, what contrasts with what was presented above.

Equally to the purchase of the disinfectants, most of the families shown acceptance to keep the new consumption habits gained during the lockdowns (64%), however it is important to note that the percentage is below the one in the purchase of disinfectants.

Most of the families that went back to the habits prior to the pandemic, belonged to middle class, are constituted by a couple with children and live in large urban areas (regions of Grande Lisboa and Grande Porto). Some of the families that started to consume more disinfectants with the fear of Covid-19, after the lockdowns, they felt more relaxed with the pandemic situation and that led them to reduce the utilization of this product. In the case of the families that used more because they spent more time at home, after the lockdowns, some of them went back to the levels of consumption prior the virus since they were starting to go back to a routine more like it was before the pandemic appeared.

In terms of the consumption of the cleaning products, most of the families kept their habits prior the pandemic in the removers, while, in the disinfectants, there was, sightly, more families that affirmed that had changed their habits during the lockdowns. The two main reasons to use more disinfectants during the lockdowns were the fear of the Covid-19 and cleaning more the house since they spent more time at home.

All the families that changed their habits affirmed that they consumed more during the lockdowns. In the case of disinfectants, there was more openness to adopt new behaviours in families from the lower-middle social class, which contrasts with our results in the purchase of the cleaning products.

After the lockdowns there was a good level of acceptance to keep the changes in the disinfectants, while in the removers most of the families went back to their old habits.

5.6. Post-purchase of the Cleaning Products

As it was priorly explained in this dissertation, WOM is a topic with big importance in the current days, so it made total sense to try to understand, according to the families interviewed, the impact of this subject. Based on the words of Berger (2014), there are two perspectives to take in account: the sender of the WOM and receiver of the WOM. So, having in account these words, we divided this topic according to the knowledge that the members of families interviewed have about the experiences of others and, also, if they already shared their experiences with others.

5.6.1. Knowledge of experiences

Starting with the removers, 37% of the families interviewed about this topic affirmed that they have knowledge about experiences that were shared with them. Among these families, 94% remembered of experiences shared with someone in person, while just 19% of families remembered of experiences digitally shared. In the regions of Algarve and Interior Norte, none of the families interviewed remembered an experience shared with them.

Regarding the digital channels where these experiences were shared, two of the families mentioned a Facebook group, while there was another one that mentioned a group of friends in WhatsApp. It is interesting to notice that one of the families shown a bit of distrust regarding the information shared in that Facebook group about the UHU removers, since they didn't know who the person was and the true interest of this person to share that experience. At the same time, in the case of the family who received the feedback about a remover through a close friend in WhatsApp they were really interested in the product right away, and, at the time of the second interview, they were using the remover in question in their home cleanings. This example illustrates the importance of the person who shares the experience with the receiver of the WOM and the value that in future he/she will give to that experience share with him/her.

"On social media, cleaning products are already a topic of discussion, but we don´t know the person who is promoting a product and we even think that he must earn some money for what he is saying"

Woman, 49 years old, nursery assistant, Grândola

"I started to use Mistolin based on recommendation from a friend"

Woman, 46 years old, manager, Leça da Palmeira

The big majority of these experiences shared with these families were about positive experiences, and, in some cases, with the intuit of advising to use the removers that are being discussed about.

Moving on to the disinfectants, we have 32% of families that affirmed to remember at least one experience shared with them about this type of product. In this case, just a family mentioned an experience being shared with them online through a Facebook group. Once again, like in the case of the removers, there was a bit distrust about the experiences being shared in this group for the same reasons presented before in the part related to the removers.

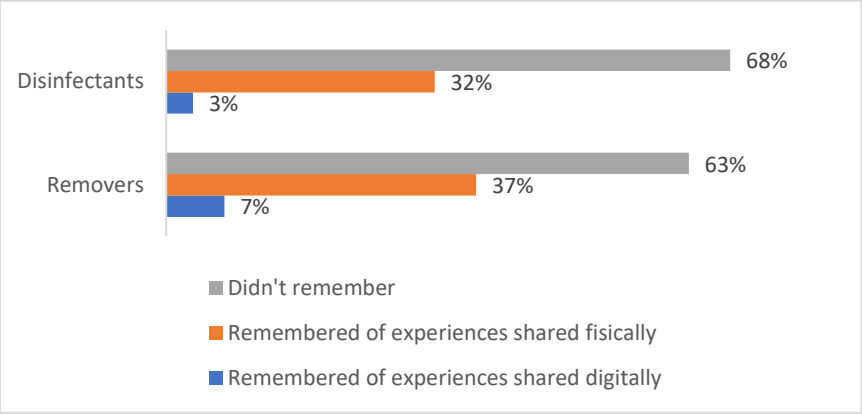


Figure 18 - Distribution of the families by their knowledge of experiences about cleaning products

Like in the removers, most of the experiences shared with these families were also about positive experiences, and, in some cases, with the intuit of advising them to use the disinfectants that are being discussed about.

5.6.2. Sharing of experiences

In this point, we take a look to the perspective in which the members of the different families interviewed are the ones sharing experiences about the cleaning products under analysis.

An aspect that differs in this perspective, when the members of families are the receiver of the WOM, is that no one mentioned to have shared an experience with others digitally.

Besides that, the percentages of sharing experiences are lower than the knowledge of experiences of others in both the removers (26%) and the disinfectants (26%). Contrary to what stated in the knowledge of experiences of others, where the percentage associated with the removers was a little bit higher than the one belonging to the disinfectants, in what refers to sharing of experiences the percentages of each of the two types of products are very tied.

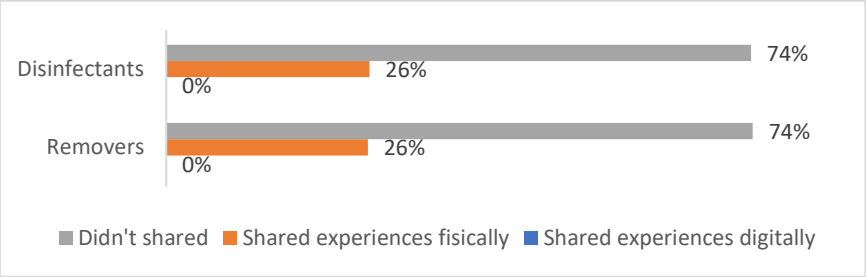


Figure 19- Distribution of the families by their sharing of experiences about cleaning products

The experiences shared are very similar to ones that receive in both products, since most of them referred, once again, to positive experiences that had, in some cases, the intuit of advising others to use a certain product.

One thing that was brough up in the interviews, is that usually the conversations about cleaning products are held between women. This can also be confirmed by the fact that the women presented in the different interviews did the majority of talking when the topic was cleaning and the cleaning products, what can be easy to verify since most of comments made cited are from women.

"We talk about in women's conversations"

Woman, 49 years, manager, Fátima

5.6.3. Covid-19 impact in the post-purchase of the cleaning products

Having in account the data presented previously about the knowledge and sharing of experiences regarding the removers and disinfectants, it´s clear that the lockdowns periods affected massively the WOM. The families interviewed, when remembered sharing experiences, they only did it fiscally, and, in the case of when the families are on the receiver´s side of the WOM, only two families had knowledge about experiences shared with them.

During the periods of the two lockdowns, families had to stay at home and the use of masks and social distance were mandatory, what didn´t allow people to engage in conversations like they did in prior to these periods. In that sense, people were not able to talk about their experiences about the cleaning products physically. At the same time, there wasn´t any alteration in the share or knowledge of experiences digitally mention by the families interviewed, it´s clear that there was a decrease in terms of WOM during the two lockdowns.

After the lockdowns, and as the restrictions imposed were lifted, people were able to join and have conversations physically like they did it prior to the pandemic period. In that sense, families are once again able to share their experiences and get to know the experiences of others like they did it before. However, since our data shows that the main topic of conversations about cleaning products is with the intuit of advising others to use a certain product, it is expected that the families that decided to purchase and consume more removers and disinfectants will start to speak or to speak more about their experiences with these products.

In the case of families that increased their use of these products during the two lockdowns and maintained it after those periods, they showed more enthusiasm about the products in questions during interviews:

"It [Mold and Fungus Remover] is very good! Excellent! Among the best I had at home!"

Woman, 56 years old, teacher, Grândola

"I think I will continue to use it [Multi-surfaces Disinfectant]! I like it very much!"

Woman, 49 years old, nursery assistant, Grândola

Therefore, it is expected that, probably, the families in this situation will tend to speak more and with the same enthusiasm that they have shown in interviews.

The majority of the WOM generated about cleaning products occurs face to face. Having that in mind, both lockdowns had a major effect in the WOM about these products. At the same time. there wasn´t any alteration in the share or knowledge of experiences digitally mention by the families interviewed.

After the lockdowns, people were able to join and have conversations physically and are once again able to share their experiences and get to know the experiences of others like they did before. It is expected that the families that decided to purchase and consume more removers and disinfectants will start to speak or to speak more about their experiences with these products.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The outbreak of Covid-19 caused a scenario of uncertainty two lockdowns and restricted the freedoms of Portuguese families. More than that, the pandemic situation had a huge impact on our economy and society. Events like this tend to have a big impact on the consumer, which may lead him or her to be more receptive to change his or her habits of purchase and consumption.

This dissertation steams from a collaborative study that consisted in an ethnographic approach with two evenings in the households with each family including mealtime. This study, through an In Situ Methodology, aimed to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the consumer in different product and service categories, including the cleaning products.

Based on the results collected, it is now possible to answer the formulated research questions and conclusions can be drawn from the research that might be useful for the theory and practice of marketing and business management.

6.1. General Overview

The Covid-19 had a big effect in the consumer habits in the FMCG general context, and, considering the topic of our study, in the cleaning products. Even though, most of the habits were maintained in what regards to the different research questions that were raised in this dissertation, there were some changes that can´t be overlooked.

In what concerns the purchase of FMCG, there were a lot of new habits being adopted during the lockdowns. The main change that the families embraced was going less to the supermarkets or the hypermarkets, opting to make larger purchases compared to what they did before. Nevertheless, this habit was mostly rejected after the lockdowns. The habits that were most accepted after the lockdowns were the purchase in stores near to the consumer's address and the online purchase. This corresponds to the findings from the study from Accenture (2020), that mentioned that purchases were centred on the most basic needs, people shopped more consciously, bought locally, and were embracing digital commerce

In the cleaning products analysed, most of the families kept their behaviours, nevertheless, there were some families that affirmed to purchase and consumed more

these products with the outbreak of the pandemic situation. This effect was bigger in the disinfectants, and, in this product, the main reason that families presented to justify the changes was the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic, with other families also mentioning the fact that they spent more time at home. This is aligned with what was stated by Egger et al. (2021), that defended that the main conditioning in the consumption behaviour during the pandemic crisis was the fear caused by the context.

6.2. Theorical implications

Having in account all the insight raised during our research, we can take from it some knowledge that can be added to the theorical knowledge, that already exists, about the effect of the Covid-19 in the consumer behaviour, especially in what concerns the cleaning products.

Based on our results, it is very clear that the main reasons that motivated the consumers to change some of their habits during the lockdowns, caused by a several pandemic contexts, were related to health reasons, since they were very afraid at that time. Nevertheless, some of these new behaviours, as the pandemic scenario was getting more controlled, continued to be part of the consumer habits, because during the lockdowns, the new habits to be part of their cleaning daily routine and they satisfied with their use.

In what is related to purchase and consumption of the cleaning product, most of the changes happened in families constituted by a couple with school age children by a large margin.

Regarding the WOM about the category products studied, most of them are generated in face-to-face conversations, especially between women, because they are more familiarized with the cleaning and the products in question.

Finally, the biggest changes that stayed after the lockdowns in the light of FMCG purchase are related to more convenient ways of purchasing in the larger urban areas. Purchasing next to home and online are habits that stayed, in those areas, after the lockdowns.

Another aspect that should be mentioned is that during the lockdowns, families decided to go less times to the supermarkets and hypermarkets, opting to make larger

purchases compared to what they did before. Nevertheless, that was a habit that was mostly rejected when the pandemic situation started to improve.

6.3. Managerial implications

Considering the results and conclusions taken in this study, we can identify managerial insights and implications that should be considered for future of companies in the cleaning products market in Portugal.

One of the conclusions of this study is that consumers are opened to purchase in stores closer to their houses, in the Grande Lisboa region, and online, in the Portuguese larger urban areas, after the highest peak of the pandemic. Having, this evidence, in account, it is important that brands are more present in these types of points of sale which are more convenient to their clients.

Considering that the pandemic context changed a considerable number of families' habits in the cleaning products, brands should have in account the context that we live in their communication messages and product management. A big example of this, is the impact that the Covid-19 situation had on disinfectants compared to the removers, since it was perceived by the consumers as safer against the pandemic. This is very important, because most of families that started to buy disinfectants continued, because after the lockdowns, it turned out to be a habit that they liked.

Given that Covid-19 has not disappeared and that many contagious diseases are transmitted through the lack of disinfection, it makes sense for brands to run communication campaigns with the focus on "we have learned disinfection habits during the pandemic, we must continue to prevent the spread of Covid, flu and other contagious diseases".

Since most of the WOM generated, about this category of products, is done in face-to-face conversations, brands should consider having physical advertising, like in MUPI's and big panels, in strategical locations where people gather with each other.

Another point, it is that the consumers tend to trust more in their peers when the topic is cleaning products. In that sense, it is important that brands in this sector choose as their ambassadors well-known trusted personalities that are perceived as genuine and with knowledge about this type of products.

6.4. Limitations of Research

Regards of the efforts that were made to carry on a research that was theoretically and empirically strong and free of bias, it had certain limitations that could impact the findings of this study, such as the following:

- A sample of 52 families is very good for an exploratory and qualitative approach, however it may be considered a small sample for quantitative conclusions, so the results may lack some sustention and generalization, that would have ~~in~~ a study with a larger sample;
- In this study were not included all the regions of Portugal, lacking mainly inland regions and the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira;
- This thesis was based on a parallel collaborative study made by Marketing Future Cast Lab, within a timeline from the end of May 2021 until the end July 2021. Having in account the fact that the last lockdown ended in beginning of May of this year, perhaps not enough time had passed to access which new habits and behaviours had been maintained;
- The data collected about purchase experience could had been more relevant if it had been conducted a study next to the consumer in a purchase environment/situation.

6.5. Future Research

In terms of future research, there is still an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the lockdowns caused by the pandemic situation in the Portuguese families, within the context of other sectors and products categories. That would provide a better and more generalized understanding of the impact of this period in the Portuguese families and consumers.

Additional research should also be developed for other countries due to the existing cultural and geographical differences between different countries and locations in the globe. That would certainly provide broader and more diversified insights that could aid in the creation of a global model for brands and managers worldwide to better understand the new habits of purchase and consumption after the Covid-19 pandemic.

A bigger and more geographically sample would tremendously help to generalize and gather stronger conclusions. Besides that, this study collected data right after the end of the last lockdown in Portugal, so it would be very important and enriching to do other studies about the same topic with a longer time span, in order to better understand which new habits were really maintained until nowadays.

In terms of the purchase experience, it could be very insightful to conduct a new study using a Shadowing methodology. This methodology has the advantage of involving the researcher closely following the consumer in the moment and environment of his/her purchase. That would be better to understand how the purchase experience of the consumer plays out and the insights taken from it would be more reliable.

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8. Attachments

Attachment A – Interview Script concerning the Cleaning Products

1. The purchase
1) Where do you buy the products?
2) What is the frequency of purchase?
3) When do you purchase?
4) How much do you purchase?
5) Do you buy for trial?
6) How is the selection process in front of the shelf?
7) In the existence of promotional packs, would you prefer the unit or the pack (promotional pack or product offer)?
8) What image do you have of the main brands?
9) In the household, regardless price issues, which brand would you prefer?
10) What drives you to buy again?
11) During the lockdown, what were the changes in the purchasing habits?
12) Which habits were maintained after the lockdown?
13) Do you have an interest in recharges?
14) Are you sensible to packaging produced with recycled material?
2. The utilization
1) What are the usage situations?
2) Do you think that the explanation of use is important?
3) Do you find the information on the disposable useful?
4) Do you consider packaging with child proof system important?
5) Do you have anu idea of how many packages do you use per year?
6) During the lockdown, what were the changes in the consume habits?
7) Which habits were maintained after the lockdown?
8) What levels of stock do you usually have at home?
9) Which is the level of knowledge of the brands' communication messages?
10) Is there a place where you would like to buy the products under analysis which at the time are not currently available?
3. The post-utilization

1) Do you remember having been told about experiences, on a physical or digital level, regarding buying and/or using the products under review?
2) Do you remember having recounted experiences, on a physical or digital level, regarding buying and/or using the products under review?

Annex B – Collaborative Study Families List

Family	Region	Social class	Type of family
1	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Couple with school age children
2	Algarve	Middle	Other persons
3	Algarve	Middle	Other persons
4	Algarve	Middle	Other persons
5	Alentejo	Middle	Other persons
6	Alentejo	Middle	Other persons
7	Alentejo	Middle	Couple with school age children
8	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
9	Alentejo	Upper-middle	Other persons
10	Alentejo	Lower-middle	Couple without children
11	Alentejo	Lower-middle	Other persons
12	Alentejo	Lower-middle	Other persons
13	Alentejo	Middle	Couple with school age children
14	Alentejo	Lower-middle	Couple with school age children
15	Alentejo	Middle	Couple with school age children
16	Alentejo	Lower-middle	Couple without children
17	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
18	Grande Porto	Middle	Couple without children
19	Grande Porto	Middle	Couple with school age children
20	Grande Porto	Middle	Couple with school age children
21	Grande Porto	Middle	Couple with school age children
22	Grande Porto	Middle	Single parent with school age children
23	Grande Porto	Middle	Couple without children
24	Grande Porto	Middle	Single parent with school age children
25	Grande Porto	Middle	Single parent with school age children
26	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
27	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Other persons
28	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Couple without children
29	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
30	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Other persons
31	Grande Lisboa	Middle	Single parent with school age children
32	Grande Lisboa	Middle	Couple without children
33	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple without children
34	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Couple without children
35	Grande Lisboa	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children

36	Grande Lisboa	Middle	Couple with school age children
37	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Couple with school age children
38	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Couple without children
39	Grande Lisboa	Lower-middle	Single parent with school age children
40	Interior Norte	Lower-middle	Single parent with school age children
41	Interior Norte	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
42	Interior Norte	Middle	Couple without children
43	Interior Norte	Middle	Single parent with school age children
44	Grande Lisboa	Middle	Single parent with school age children
45	Litoral Centro	Middle	Couple with school age children
46	Litoral Centro	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children
47	Litoral Centro	Middle	Couple with school age children
48	Litoral Centro	Middle	Single parent with school age children
49	Litoral Centro	Upper-middle	Couple without children
50	Litoral Centro	Middle	Single parent with school age children
51	Litoral Centro	Middle	Couple with school age children
52	Litoral Centro	Upper-middle	Couple with school age children