



## **ASSESSMENT OF CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROMOTION MIX ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS IN SELECTED CITIES OF ETHIOPIA**

**Girma Tilahun Weldehawariat<sup>1</sup> & Dr. B.B. Singla<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, School Of Management Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, India,

<sup>2</sup>assistant Professor Of Management, School Of Management Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

### **ABSTRACT**

*Integrated marketing communication brings companies ahead of competition by delivering a consistent message and getting favorable image if executed cautiously. The concern of the paper was examining consumers' attitude towards promotion mix of FMCGs in Ethiopia. The product categories for the study were cosmetics, soaps, and detergents. The methodology was quantitative survey of respondents and non-probability convenient sampling was used. The focus of the paper is on comparing consumers' attitudes towards promotion mix elements like ads, sales promotion, public relation, personal selling and direct marketing across gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, and income. Valid data gathered from 500 respondents from Addis Ababa, Bahir dar, and Gondar was analyzed by ANOVA, independent sample t-test, correlation, mean score and multiple regression. The result shows that consumers overall are optimistic towards promotion mix but there are significant differences in attitude towards advertising across all demographics studied. Also, significant differences are noticed across age and cities for ads, sales promotion, and personal selling. Women demonstrate more positive attitude than men towards promotion mix. Significant differences across education in all promotion mix except direct marketing was also identified. Some of the deviations in findings from earlier similar research findings such as decline in consumers' sentiment towards promotion mix tools with increase in education, income, and occupation needs further study.*

*Key Words: integrated marketing communication, attitude, promotion mix, FMCGs, demographic variable.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In a holistic view of marketing, all the internal marketing, integrated marketing, relationship marketing and performance marketing are considered to maximize the overall organizational

goal. The intent of the paper to examine what integrated marketing communication seems and consumers' attitude towards promotion mix in Ethiopia.

Promotion mix is the specific blend of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct-marketing tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships. (Kotler and Keller, 2012)

Negative views about advertising appear to be a common trend among developed and emerging economies regardless of differences in the degree of advertising and deviations in the coverage of government regulations of advertising. This paper attempts to critically assess the issue of consumer attitude towards promotion mix in Ethiopia.

Attitude toward the ad represents the receivers' feelings of favorability or unfavorability toward the ad. Advertisers are interested in consumers' reactions to the ad because they know that affective reactions are an important determinant of advertising effectiveness, since these reactions may be transferred to the brand itself. (Belch and Belch, 2003)

As an integrative view, a marketer might selectively employ television, radio, and print advertising, public relations and events, and public relations and Web site communications so each contributes on its own as well as improving the effectiveness of the others. Each must also deliver a consistent brand message at every contact. (Kotler and Keller 2012).

In the light of achieving overall promotion mix objectives, marketers need to consider the factors that influence the attitude of consumers toward the promotional programs since it is an important part of the marketing process to realize the challenges faced by .(Kalaiselvi and Muruganandam, 2013) .

Although extensive research would be available in the developed as well as in emerging economies, there is literature gap concerning attitude of consumers in promotion mix in developing economy like Ethiopia. Hence, the paper attempts to identify the kind of attitude consumers have toward promotion mix in Ethiopia.

The paper is going to address the following basic research question.

1. What is the attitude of consumers towards promotion mix of FMCGs?
2. Does consumers' attitude vary across demographics?

The major objective of the paper is to examine the attitude of consumers toward promotion mix in Ethiopia. Specifically the objectives were identifying the kind of attitude consumers have

towards promotion mix and exploring variations, if any, of consumers' attitudes across demographics.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Promotion mix and consumers' attitude**

In advertising research, the major research findings include: social integration, and materialism, & demographics contributes for consumer perception and attitude but consumer manipulation have negative impact on consumer attitude.; though choice of the value and the poster is not different by gender, consumers choose posters that fit their values and lifestyles; and others.(Mensah, etal,2013; Eze and Lee,2012)

Philip Odou and Pauline de Pechperrou (2010); Omatayo (2011);Kalaiselvi and Murugandam (2013); studied Sales promotion and consumers attitude and research finding shows that ;more skeptical consumers question high discounts offers deals; and, brand name, price discounts, exchange schemes &warranty plays significant role in consumers' purchase decision;

Swan, Bowers, and Richardson (1999); Potluri (2008); Hocking (2012) examined personal selling and consumers' attitude and trust between salesperson and customers and their findings revealed trust has a moderate but beneficial influence on the development of positive customer attitudes, electronic forums and blogs aware consumers about cosmetics industry but they do not trust salespersons suggestions.

Jun and Jaafar (2011); and Azziz and Ariffin(2010) studies on direct marketing/online shopping and consumer attitude focused on identifying consumer attitude toward ads; identified consumer attitude toward web ads and found that consumers have positive attitude towards mobile ads; that here is relationship between online shopping and consumers' attitude.

Public relations convey messages to the target public with the help of the media on behalf of a client, with the objective to influence the opinions and create favorable image for products, services and business of the company. (Gardner & Shuman, 1987, in B K Suthar, etal ,2014)

*H1: Consumers have favorable attitude towards promotion mix elements*

### **2.2.Demographic variables and attitude towards promotion mix**

Many attempts were made to analyze the influence of various demographic variables such as marital status, income, occupation, education, age and gender on consumers' overall attitudes towards marketing as well as each of the four P's, i.e., product, price, promotion and place. (Wee and Chan, 1989 ; Chan and Cui, 2004; Ferdous and Towfique, 2008 ; Chan, Yau and Chan, 1990; and Gaski and Etzel, 1986 )

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Gender**

Wee and Chan (1989), Chan, Yau and Chan (1990), Ferdous and Towfique (2008) have indicated that women held more pessimistic attitudes towards marketing than men. However, Gaski and Etzel (1986) and Chan and Cui (2004) found that the reverse scenario.

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Age**

In their findings, French et al. (1982), Wee and Chan (1989), and Chan, Yau and Chan (1990) found that the older consumers had more favorable attitudes towards product, price and advertising.

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Education**

Wee and Chan (1989), Chan, Yau and Chan (1990), Chan and Cui (2004) found that the level of educational attainment was positively related to subjects' attitudes towards marketing. That is, the higher the level of educational attainment, the more positive was their attitude towards marketing. However, Ferdous and Towfique (2008) found no significant differences between different levels of educational attainment and marketing sentiments.

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Occupation**

In their studies French et al. (1982), Wee and Chan (1989) and Chan, Yau and Chan (1990) found that the occupation and attitudes towards marketing were positively related. Chan and Cui (2004) stated that even though blue collar workers were more positive about retailing, they were less satisfied with advertising than white collar workers, students and others. Ferdous and Towfique (2008) study results indicated significant difference between the various occupational categories and overall attitude towards marketing.

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Income**

Wee and Chan (1989) and Chan, Yau and Chan (1990) found that the higher the income, the more favorable attitude of consumers towards marketing and vice versa.

#### **Consumers Attitudes versus Marital Status**

Wee and Chan (1989) have found in their study that married people held more favorable attitude towards marketing than unmarried people.

The following hypotheses have been proposed for empirical testing:

*H2: There are no significant differences in consumers' attitude toward promotion mix tools across gender, age groups, education, occupations, marital status, and income,*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research approach is surveys design that employed quantitative method and focus group interview. Cities chosen were Addis Ababa (the capital city), Bahir dar and Gondar. The populations were consumers with age of 18 years and above. And the product category were Fast Moving Consumers Goods (FMCGs) mainly cosmetics, detergents and soaps.

Based on Malohtra and Dash (2011) ,Sekeran and Bougie (2010), and Creswell (2009) sample size determination suggestion, the sampling technique used in this paper was convenience sampling. A survey of 535 customers was the target for the study.

A structured questionnaire was used to gather cross sectional data from sample of respondents. The questionnaire was adopted from earlier literature such as Gaski and Etzle (1986),Malhotra and Dash(2011), Sekeran andBougie(2010),Goldsmith,etal(2000),and Bruner(2009). Continuous likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree(Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree; )was used as measurement scale. Pilot testing was made on 100 sample respondents from Bahir dar and Addis Ababa to check the content validity of the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was hand distributed to 535 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha result of the pilot test is .921 which is above the acceptable level of 0.7. From 57 items, 37 items has been retained after editing for redundancy and similarity of issues.

Data collected through survey was edited and coded and analyzed by SPSS version21. Mean score, independent sample t-test, and ANOVA were employed. Reliability of data was checked by using Cronba's alpha. The alpha value was .853.

### **3. Data analysis and discussion**

*H1: Consumers have favorable attitude towards each promotion mix elements*

#### 4.1. Overall Consumers' Attitudes towards Promotion Mix

**Table 4.1. Aggregate Consumers' Attitude towards Advertising**

Items	N	Mean
ads deceptive	500	2.71
Ads relevance	500	3.4060
Ads current awareness creation	500	3.2560
Ads believability and perfection	500	2.7320
Caster motive of ads	500	3.0960
Promotion happy feeling	500	3.2820
TV/newspaper /magazine ads interesting	500	3.1240
Ads positive influence of opinion about products	500	3.0980
Ads awareness leading to interest to seek products	500	3.1460
Packaging information leading to purchase intent	500	3.5060
Valid N (list wise)	500	
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>3.14</b>

Source: Survey, 2014

The aggregate result of consumers' sentiment towards advertising is depicted on Table 4.1. Except for ads' deception and believability of ads, the mean score is above 3 meaning that the respondents are optimistic about advertising issues. Furthermore, the aggregate mean score (3.14) shows that consumers in general have positive sentiments towards advertising. Various studies substantiate the importance of advertising and the advertising that creates emotional attachments are more favored. (Shallu and Sangeeta Gupta, 2013)

**Table 4.2. Aggregate Consumers' Attitude towards Sales promotion**

Items	N	Mean
Sales promotion schemes reliability	500	2.5280
Sales promotion relevance	500	3.4460
Sales discount belief	500	2.7000
Coupons leading to purchase preference	500	2.8840
Sales promotion good for purchase intention	500	3.0700
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>2.93</b>

Source: Survey, 2014

In the case of sales promotion, consumers in Ethiopia are less optimistic about the sales promotion scheme as consumers' overall mean is below 3 and the aggregate mean score for sales

promotion is also less than 3. The consumers are less optimistic on sales promotion because they might have doubt about the implementation of the sales promotion schemes in a proper way. The focus group interview done on some consumers also substantiates this. Furthermore, Omatayo (2011) identified that positive relationship exists between sales promotion. Skepticism and disbelief of consumers on advertising and sales promotion have been corroborated by several studies such as Odou and Pechperrou, 2010 & Eze and Lee, 2012.

**Table 4.3. Aggregate Consumers' Attitude towards Public Relations**

Items	N	Mean
Companies' continuous PR engagement	500	2.87
Public relation relevance	500	3.7740
Positive word of mouth on cosmetics and detergents favored	500	3.3260
Companies motive to engage in PR to add to societal value	500	3.1320
Companies' PR crates awareness on existing cosmetics and soaps in the market	500	3.4580
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>3.30</b>

Source: Survey, 2014

Consumers are overall enthusiastic towards public relations attempt of a company. Except for the lack of continuous engagement by companies as consumers believe, the public relations task of a company are well seen positively by consumers. In support of the above findings, various studies documented that PR activity is antecedent of loyalty of consumers and that it is conscience of corporation. (Chen, 2009)

**Table 4.4. Aggregate Consumers' Attitude towards Personal Selling**

Items	N	Mean
Retail stores' adequate collection of products	500	2.97
Retail stores' relevance	500	3.3440
Retail stores' reliable service delivery	500	3.1620
<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>3.16</b>
Source: Survey, 2014		

As shown in Table 4.4., most consumers are enthusiastic on the personal selling relevance and the services provided but the consumers show milder view towards availability of adequate alternatives in the stores. The focus group interview also supports this parameter that consumers in Ethiopian context rely on personal selling in selection of FMCG as soaps, cosmetics and detergents. We will find supporting report of personal selling essential uses from earlier studies such as Potluri,2008 and Hocking, 2012.

**Table 4.5. Aggregate Consumers’ Attitude towards Direct Marketing**

Items	N	Mean
Direct marketing relevance	500	3.6640
SMS relevance	500	3.2880
Online ads of cosmetics and detergents(if any)	500	3.3240
Online purchase intention	500	3.0620
Valid N (list wise)	500	
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>3.33</b>

Source: Survey, 2014

As we can observe from the above Table(Table 4.5) consumers are positive towards direct marketing since their overall attitude is above the mean. Although it is not practiced in cosmetics, soaps and detergents that much in Ethiopian context, consumers’ are happy if they have the opportunity to deal in direct marketing such as e-commerce, online shopping, and telemarketing. Several studies in literature corroborates this (Jobber and Fahy, 2003)

#### **4.1.2. Disaggregate Results**

This part deals with consumers’ attitude towards promotion mix on a disaggregate basis, that is, across each demographics variables. Overall mean values are used since the Cronbach’s alpha was found to be above threshold level (above 0.70). To compare the attitudes of consumers towards promotion mix across Demographic variables, hypothesis has been developed which states:

*H2: Consumers’ attitudes towards promotion mix of cosmetics and detergents do not differ significantly across demographic variables (gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, and income).*

## Gender

*H2.1. Consumers do not vary in attitude towards promotion mix elements across gender.*

**Table 4.6. Consumers' attitude towards promotion mix elements across Gender**

Gender	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
Male	217	3.0516	2.8747	3.2175	3.1306	3.3168
Female	283	3.2007	2.9647	3.3859	3.3227	3.3481
P Value		.010	.110	.007	.008	.660

Source: Survey,2014

The independent sample t-test result in table 4.6 indicates that except for sales promotion and direct marketing, the difference in consumers' attitude between men and women is significant since at 2 tail t-test, the significance level is below the threshold level of 0.05. In the case of advertising, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing, both men and women have average favorable attitude towards attitude since the mean score is above 0.3.

But, women have more positive view than male toward promotion mix. Researches being done earlier indicate two opponent views. On one hand Wee and Chan(1989), and Chan, Yau and Chan(1993)have indicated that women held more pessimistic attitudes towards marketing than men. However, Gaski and Etzel (1986) and Chan and Cui (2004)found that the reverse is true. Moreover, men were found more unreceptive to marketing than women (Gaski and Etzel, 1986; Chan and Cui, 2004).

*Age . H2.2. Consumers do not vary in attitude towards promotion mix elements across age.*

**Table 4.7. Consumers' attitude towards promotion mix elements across age**

Age	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
18-23	223	3.2682	3.0251	3.3776	3.4514	3.3543
24-29	166	3.0934	2.8867	3.2627	3.0582	3.3313
30-39	77	2.9558	2.8026	3.2935	3.1905	3.3636
40-49	22	2.8136	2.7455	3.2364	2.8333	3.0682
50-55	7	3.1714	3.1143	3.3429	3.0476	3.2500
above55	5	2.8000	2.2000	2.6800	2.6000	3.4000

Total	500	3.1360	2.9256	3.3128	3.2393	3.3345
Pvalue		.000	.002	.198	.000	.718

Source: Survey,2014

The mean score of consumers' attitude to each promotion tools across age groups ranges from 2.20 to 3.46. Attitude towards advertising across age shows a significant difference as seen from the P value of ANOVA with a decline in favoring attitude as age increases except in the age range of 50 to 55. However, earlier studies reported that older people demonstrate more optimistic view towards marketing as well as other business related decisions as they become more confident with maturity and also bears much responsibility. (Wee and Chan ,1989; Chan , Yau, and Chan,1990).

Consumers also vary significantly across age in their view towards sales promotion. As age increased, attitude toward ads declined. More aged people did not show favorable view towards sales promotion. Public relations do not indicate significant difference across various age groups. But we observed that elderly people are fewer enthusiasts as compared to those who are less than 23 years old. In the case of direct marketing, there is insignificant difference in consumers' attitude across age. Middle age adults are more optimist than other age groups.

*Education.H2:3 Consumers do not vary inn attitude towards promotion mix elements across education.*

**Table 4.8. Consumers' attitude towards promotion mix elements across Education**

Education Level	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
below high school	151	3.2351	3.0119	3.3470	3.4150	3.3957
high school	59	3.2729	3.0169	3.5288	3.3107	3.3686
Diploma	116	3.1069	2.8586	3.3259	3.0747	3.2759
bachelor degree	151	3.0589	2.9272	3.2238	3.2009	3.3411
Masters	18	2.6667	2.4556	2.8889	2.8519	2.9167
PhD	1	4.0000	2.6000	3.2000	4.0000	4.5000
Others	4	3.0250	2.4000	3.7500	3.3333	3.5625
Total	500	3.1360	2.9256	3.3128	3.2393	3.3345
P Value		.002	.004	.009	.006	.155

Source: Survey, 2014

Consumers are positive towards promotion mix elements across various education levels. However, there is significant difference in the attitude across distinct education level as the ANOVA output indicates. However, there is insignificant variation in the case of direct marketing across education groups. Those above high school are less optimistic towards sales promotion and; except for masters' education level; the rest education level respondents are enthusiastic about ads, personal selling and public relations, and direct marketing. In earlier studies, as consumers get more educated, they enjoy the benefit of marketing and they form more optimistic view towards promotion mix,( Wee and Chan ,1989; Chan, Yau and Chan,1990; Bhuian et al., 2001 ;and Chan and Cui ,2004). However, the finding in this research is not in concordance with the earlier findings.

**Occupation.H2:4.**Consumers do not vary inn attitude towards promotion mix elements across occupation.

**Table 4.9.** Consumers' attitude towards promotion mix elements across Occupation

Occupation	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
Student	149	3.2651	3.0295	3.3879	3.5391	3.4279
Self-employee	70	3.0986	2.8914	3.2857	3.0333	3.3536
Business owner	42	2.9667	2.8524	3.2524	2.9921	3.3869
Government employee	182	3.0489	2.8516	3.2407	3.0824	3.2431
House wife	26	3.2769	2.9154	3.3923	3.2051	3.3077
Others	31	3.2226	3.0452	3.4516	3.5484	3.3306
Total	500	3.1360	2.9256	3.3128	3.2393	3.3345
P Value		.013	.126	.335	.000	.438

Source: Survey, 2014

Consumers do not show significant differences across occupation for sales promotion, public relation, and direct marketing whereas they show significant variation for advertising and personal selling

From advertising perspective, housewives followed by students do have a more favorable attitude. Students and housewives, and government employee have high favoring of personal promotion as compared to business owners. Earlier studies corroborate these findings. (French et

al., 1982; Wee and Chan, 1989; and Chan, Yau and Chan, 1990). Private employees are favoring more of personal selling but less of advertising. Chan and Cui (2004) reported the same research result.

**Marital Status. H2:5** Consumers do not vary in attitude towards promotion mix elements across Marital.

**Table 4.10. Consumers’ attitude towards promotion mix elements across Marital Status**

Marital Status	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
Single	348	3.1839	2.9489	3.3368	3.2759	3.3693
Married	144	3.0340	2.8861	3.2681	3.1458	3.2726
Widowed	4	3.4000	2.7500	3.4500	3.4167	3.4375
Divorced	3	2.5333	2.6000	2.4667	3.3333	2.6667
Total	499	3.1385	2.9271	3.3126	3.2398	3.3377
P Value		.030	.536	.131	.410	.280

Source : Survey 2014

In general the overall attitude towards promotion mix tools across marital status ranges from 2.6 to 3.5 and thus we say consumers are optimistic towards all promotion mix tools across marital status. However, married people demonstrate favorable attitude but less than the unmarried or single. We find contrasting findings from a study by Wee and Chan (1989) who have found in their study that married people held more favorable attitude towards marketing than unmarried people.

**Income. H2:6.** Consumers do not vary in attitude towards promotion mix elements across income

**Table 4.11. Consumers’ attitude towards promotion mix elements across Income**

Income	N	Promotion Mix				
		Ads Mean	SP Mean	PR Mean	PS Mean	DM Mean
<1000Birr	236	3.2669	3.0424	3.3703	3.4364	3.4078
1000-5000Birr	204	3.0368	2.8422	3.2539	3.0082	3.2610
5001-10000Birr	36	2.9917	2.7111	3.3167	3.3519	3.3958
10001-15000Birr	12	2.8750	2.6500	3.2333	3.1667	2.8542
15001-20000Birr	2	3.3000	3.5000	3.1000	3.0000	3.3750

25001-30000Birr	3	3.3333	3.0000	3.6000	3.0000	3.7500
>30000Birr	7	2.6714	2.8000	3.1429	3.0476	3.3214
Total	500	3.1360	2.9256	3.3128	3.2393	3.3345
P Value		.030	.536	.131	.414	.280

Source: Survey, 2014

Except for PR and direct marketing, the P value shows there is significant difference towards the rest promotion mix tools across income (Table4.11). We can say from the results of Table 4.7 above that respondents of lower income groups and income group between Birr25, 000 to 30,000 monthly incomes have more favorable attitudes towards promotion mix elements.

The higher the income the more favorable the consumers' attitude towards promotion mix on the one hand is corroborated by earlier study such as Wee and Chan (1989) and Chan, Yau and Chan (1990). But the lesser income group higher support for the promotion mix tools do require further study.

### **Conclusion and Implication for Future Research**

This paper was intended to examine the overall attitude of consumers towards promotion mix and to this end survey method has been employed. The objectives addressed in the paper were the kinds of behavior consumers have towards promotion mix and examining the variation, if any, in consumers' attitude across demographics. Accordingly, in sum, there are positive attitudes of consumers towards each promotion mix tools overall and the first hypothesis is supported. At aggregate mean score level, most consumers agree on the deceptive nature of ads and they are skeptical about sales discount, mild on continuous public relations engagement of companies and retail stores' adequate provision of merchandise.

At the independent level of analysis across demographics, some hypotheses are supported and some are rejected. Accordingly, consumers do not show significant differences across marital status and income for promotion mix but advertising. Consumers do not show significant variation across all demographic variables for direct marketing. On the other hand, consumers demonstrate significant difference across all demographic variables for advertising. There was significant difference across age and city of residence for advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling.

Education wise, with the exception of direct marketing, significant differences are found in the remaining promotion mix tools studied.

Women have more positive view than men toward promotion mix; more aged people did not show favorable view towards sales promotion and elderly people are fewer enthusiasts compared to those less than 23 years old.

In terms education, those above high school are less optimistic towards sales promotion and except for masters' education level; the rest education level respondents are enthusiastic about ads, personal selling and public relations, and direct marketing; housewives followed by students do have a more favorable attitude towards ads. Concerning marital status, workers favor personal selling than ads. Lesser income group demonstrates higher support for the promotion mix tools do require further study.

Companies should engage on PR continuously; Retail store should provide adequate collection of products in the shelf space and sales people must use utmost effort to sustain relationship with patrons. Companies should introduce direct marketing or online shopping as an option for busy customers. Tailored advertisement across demographics is helpful for the development of effective marketing and communication program.

As we did not see an equivalent increase in sentiment of consumers towards promotion mix with the increase in education, consumers are less aware and less interested in the promotion mix program of FMCGs in Ethiopia and more work is required from marketers.

Different careers consumers need to be addressed by customized channel of communication like reaching them in their work space, through print media, via outdoor ads, or by online or web or email ads and promotion and other mechanisms. Unmarried or singles and lower income consumers demonstrated more favorable attitude towards promotion mix and this requires further study. A more comprehensive study incorporating more cities, rural areas and more samples, and other factors could be considered by future researchers.

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