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Awareness Related To Safe Shopping Practices Post Covid19 - A Cross Sectional Survey.

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ABSTRACT :

Background :This study states that COVID-19 started from one city of China in December 2019, but in a short span of time it covered almost all over the world. Nearly 216 countries are now victims of it . Some practises to decrease the spread of COVID-19 virus are social distancing, wearing a mask,etc..

Aim : The aim of the study is to analyse the awareness related to safe shopping practises post COVID 19 among the general public.

Materials and methods : A cross-sectional survey was conducted among the general population with a sample size of 105. A self administered structured questionnaire was prepared based on safe shopping practices post COVID-19, and it consisted of 15 questions. It was circulated to participants through an online platform (google forms). The statistics were performed using SPSS software, a chi-square test was used to check the association and P value of 0.05 was said to be statistically significant.

Results : 59% of the respondents were females and 41% were males,Among the respondents, a major population followed practices like wearing a mask,sanitizing and social distance while shopping.

Conclusion : This study sheds light on the current level of awareness regarding safe shopping practices post COVID-19.

KEYWORDS : Sanitising, Social distancing,Vaccination,Pandemic,Coronavirus, Innovative technique

INTRODUCTION :

COVID-19 started from one city in China in December 2019, but in a short span of time , it covered almost all over the world (1). Nearly 216 countries of the whole world are struggling for their civilization and livelihood against the coronavirus pandemic.(2). In the absence of approved vaccines or antivirals effective against COVID-19,plasma centric approaches remain key to dealing with the virus(3). Symptoms of COVID virus are fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, body aches, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. Asymptomatic cases increase the risk of transmission of infection(3). Globally a million confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been identified (4)

Some practices to decrease the spread of this virus are: the stores should be open for longer hours, we should avoid closed spaces and air conditioned stores to shop, chit based shopping should be practised, we should ask the stores to drop off the deliveries, goods purchased, sanitize your hands before and after shopping, sanitize the products you're purchasing , practise social distancing while shopping and always wear your mask. During the pandemic, small scale, home town businesses have been affected drastically, preferentially, we should promote such businesses. Some of the previous research done on this topic are cross-sectional studies on public awareness in preventing the spread of COVID-19 outbreak in India. Awareness and preparedness of COVID-19 outbreak among healthcare workers(4) . COVID-19 assessment of knowledge and awareness in Indian society(5) . Knowledge , attitude, awareness and practices towards COVID-19 among the public in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (6)An analytical study on the awareness, attitude, and practice during the COVID-19 pandemic (7) . Countries are yet to find solutions to tackle the economic crisis during a pandemic. Lack of awareness among the poor regarding safe COVID practices increases the chances of spread . Coronavirus has caused a huge economical crisis where companies, small scale workers are facing great challenges to survive in the market (8). This research is particularly important to India because the country has various diversities, the research was conducted as a part of an awareness creating exercise regarding safe shopping practices post COVID-19 in an effort to instill safer shopping practices among the general public thereby reducing the spread of the pandemic. Therefore this study will ensure people are aware about safe shopping practices during a pandemic and decrease the economic crisis faced by the country.Our team has extensive knowledge and research experience that has translated into high quality publications (9-28)**.** This study aims to create awareness related to safe shopping practices post COVID-19.

MATERIALS AND METHODS :

A cross sectional survey study through quantitative methods was done among 105 participants. The survey was conducted through online google forms in February 2021. The study had an easy reach and recruitment of participants. The limitation of the survey was that it was not representative of the entire population. Simple random sampling method was used to minimize sampling bias. Results were analyzed using SPSS software version 23.0 (IBM, Chicago, USA) and p value <0.05 was considered to be significant.

RESULTS :

This study presents the key findings of 102 respondents. Majority (59%) respondents are females and the rest are males (figure 1). 66.7% participants are fond of shopping, 20% responded maybe and 12.76% responded no (figure 2). 64.07% respondents opted yes for practising social distancing while shopping and rest did not practise social distancing (figure 3). 83.7% participants responded yes for wearing a mask while shopping (figure 4). 50% of participants prefer online shopping (figure 5).

The majority (60%) of the participants responded yes for sanitising after shopping (figure 6). 72% responded yes that they promote small scale businesses which were affected during pandemic (figure 7). 6.08% participants think that shopping practices have decreased due to COVID. About 47.06% of people think the quality of shopping has been affected due to COVID-19 (figure 8)and-48% of respondents said that there's no change in the stress and anxiety level . Half of the participants responded that they prefer getting goods delivered at their doorstep (figure 9). About 39.22% don't shop often while 20.19% shop once a month post covid. More females responded saying they sanitise after shopping than their counterparts (p value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$) is statistically significant) (figure 10). About 33.6% females responded 'very much' for preferring online shopping post covid while only 16.35% males responded they prefer online shopping 'very much' (p value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$) is statistically significant) (figure 11). Majority females (47.15%) responded 'no' for wearing hand gloves while shopping whereas only 22.12% males responded 'no; for wearing hand gloves while shopping (p value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$) is statistically significant) (figure 12). About 36.54 % females and 11.54% males think shopping practice has decreased post covid (p value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$) is statistically significant) (figure 13). About 29.8% females and 19.23% males think quality of shopping has been affected post covid (p value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$) is statistically significant) (figure 14).

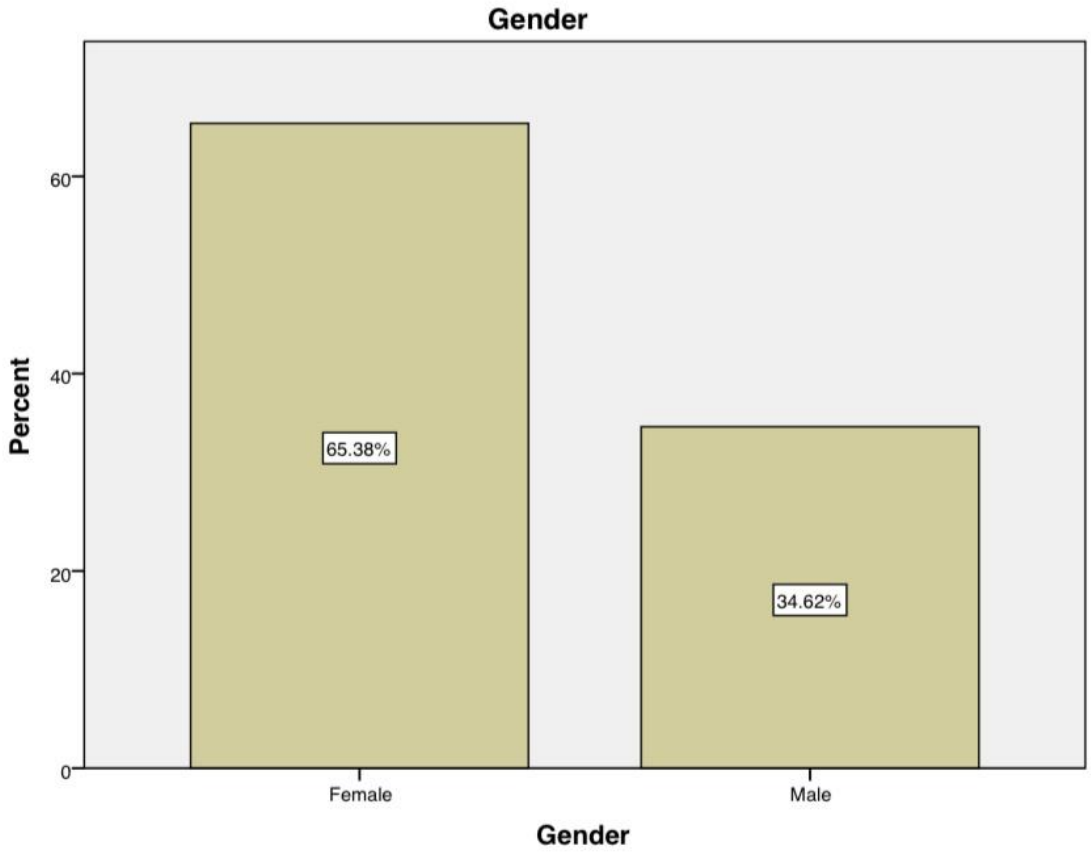

Figure 1 : Bar graph representing the percentage of male and female respondents in this survey.

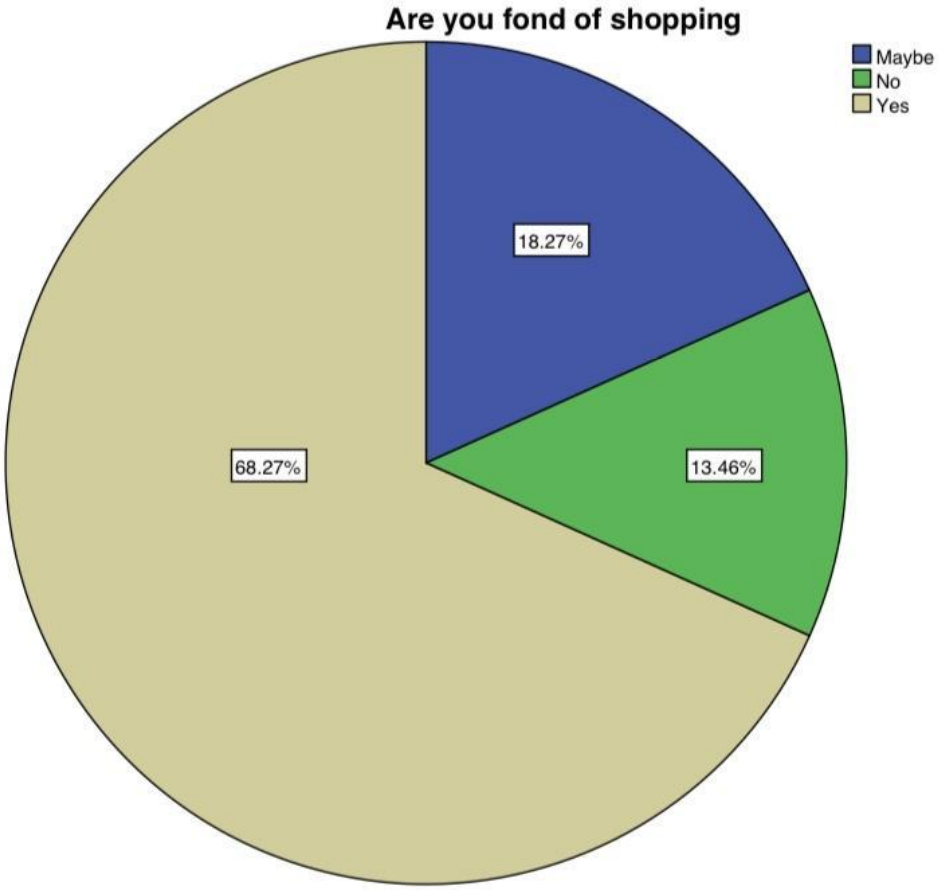

Figure 2: Pie chart showing the percentage of students fond of shopping. Majority of the participants (68%) responded yes (sandal),18% responded maybe(blue) and the remaining 13.5% responded no (green).

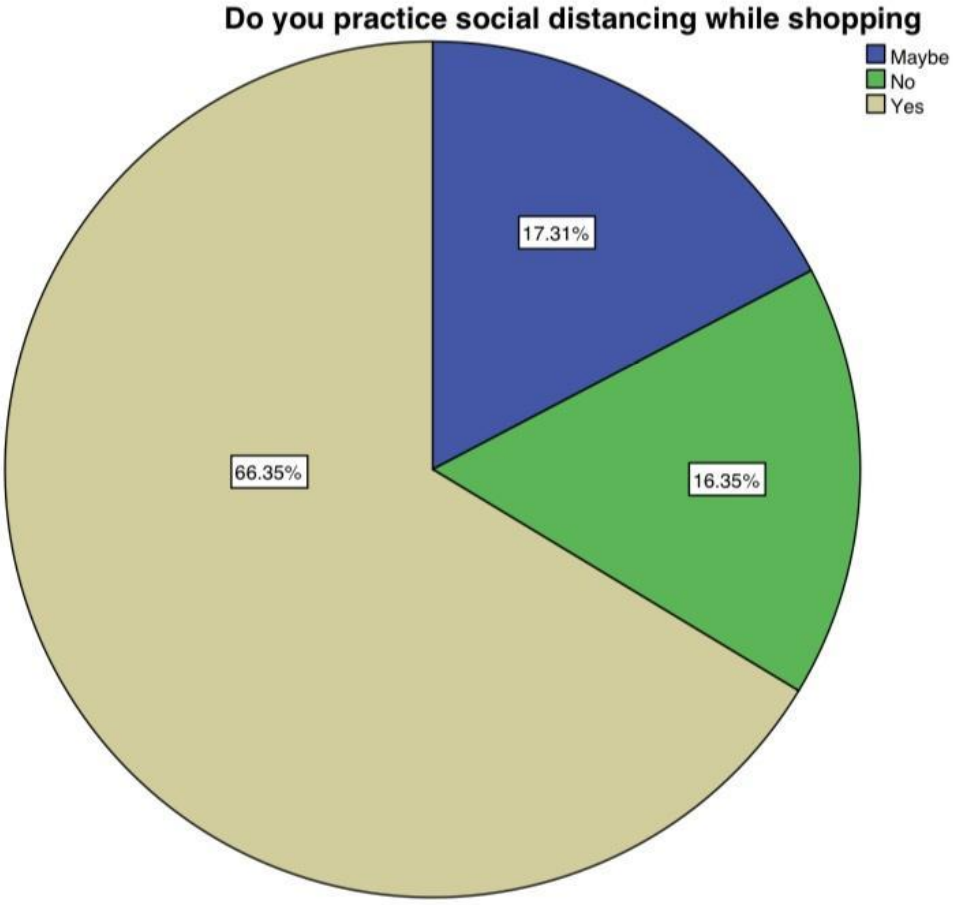

Figure 3 : Pie chart showing the percentage of students practising social distancing while shopping. Majority of the participants (66.5%) responded yes (sandal),18% responded maybe(blue) and the remaining 16% responded no (green).

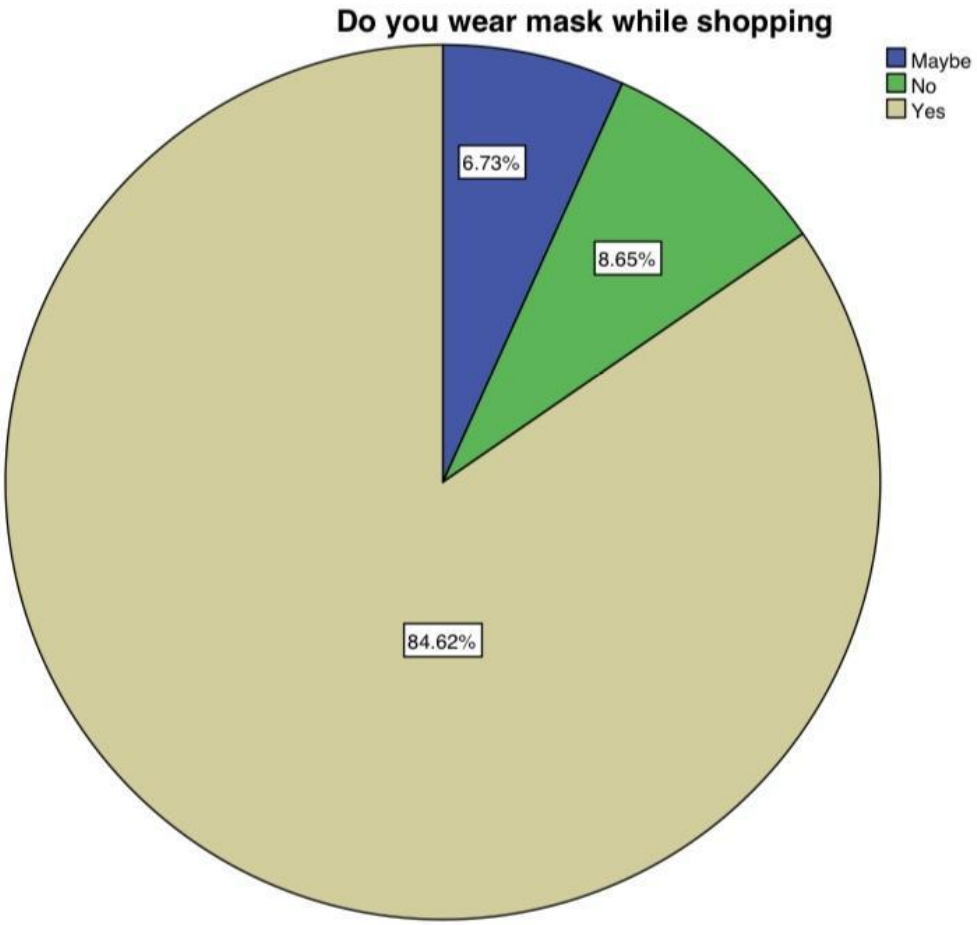

Figure 4: Pie chart showing the percentage of students wearing masks while shopping .Majority of the participants (84%) responded yes (sandal),6.7% responded maybe(blue) and the remaining 8.5% responded no (green).

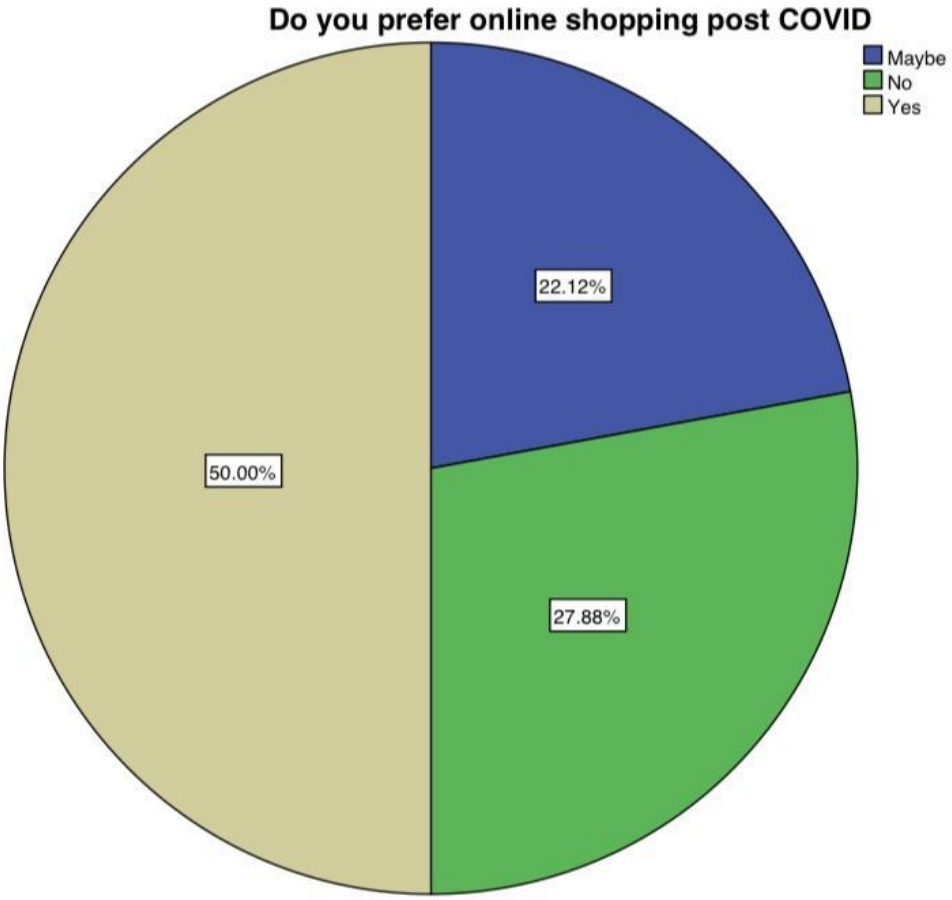

Figure 5: Pie chart showing the percentage of students who prefer online shopping .Majority of the participants (50%) responded yes (sandal),22% responded and maybe(blue) and the remaining 27.88% responded no (green).

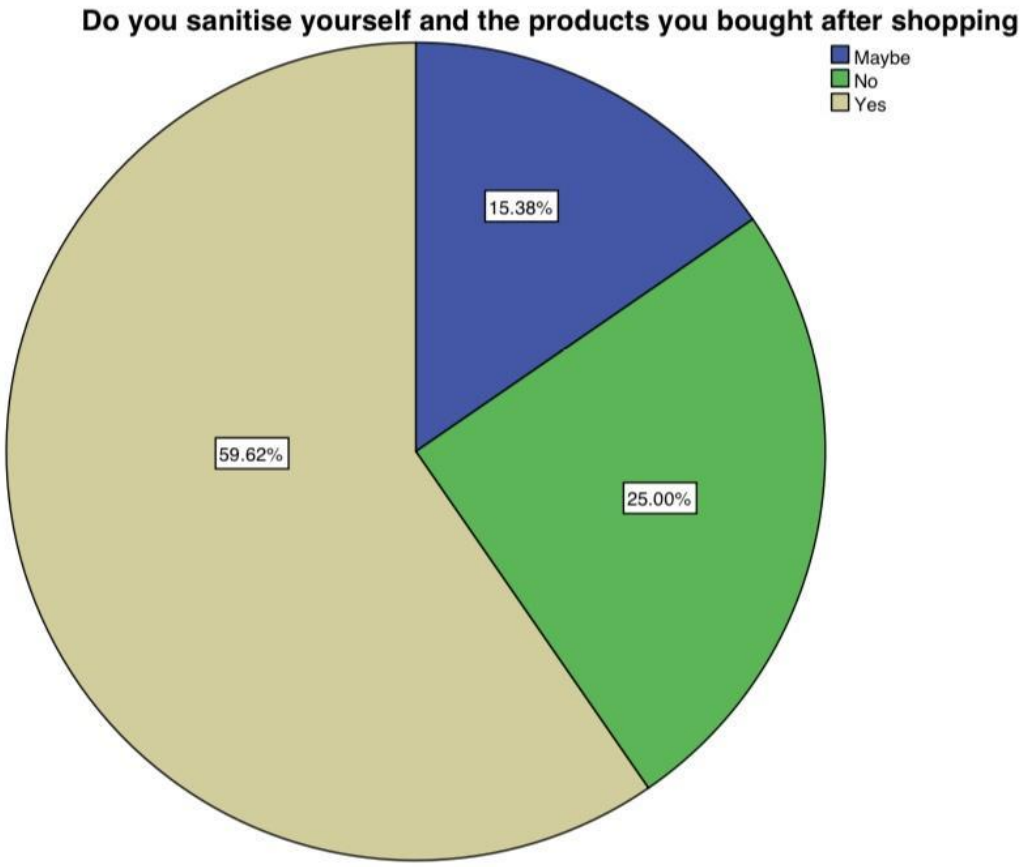

Figure 6: Pie chart showing the percentage of students sanitising after shopping .Majority of the participants (60%) responded yes (sandal), (15.38%) responded and maybe(blue) and remaining (25%) responded no (green).

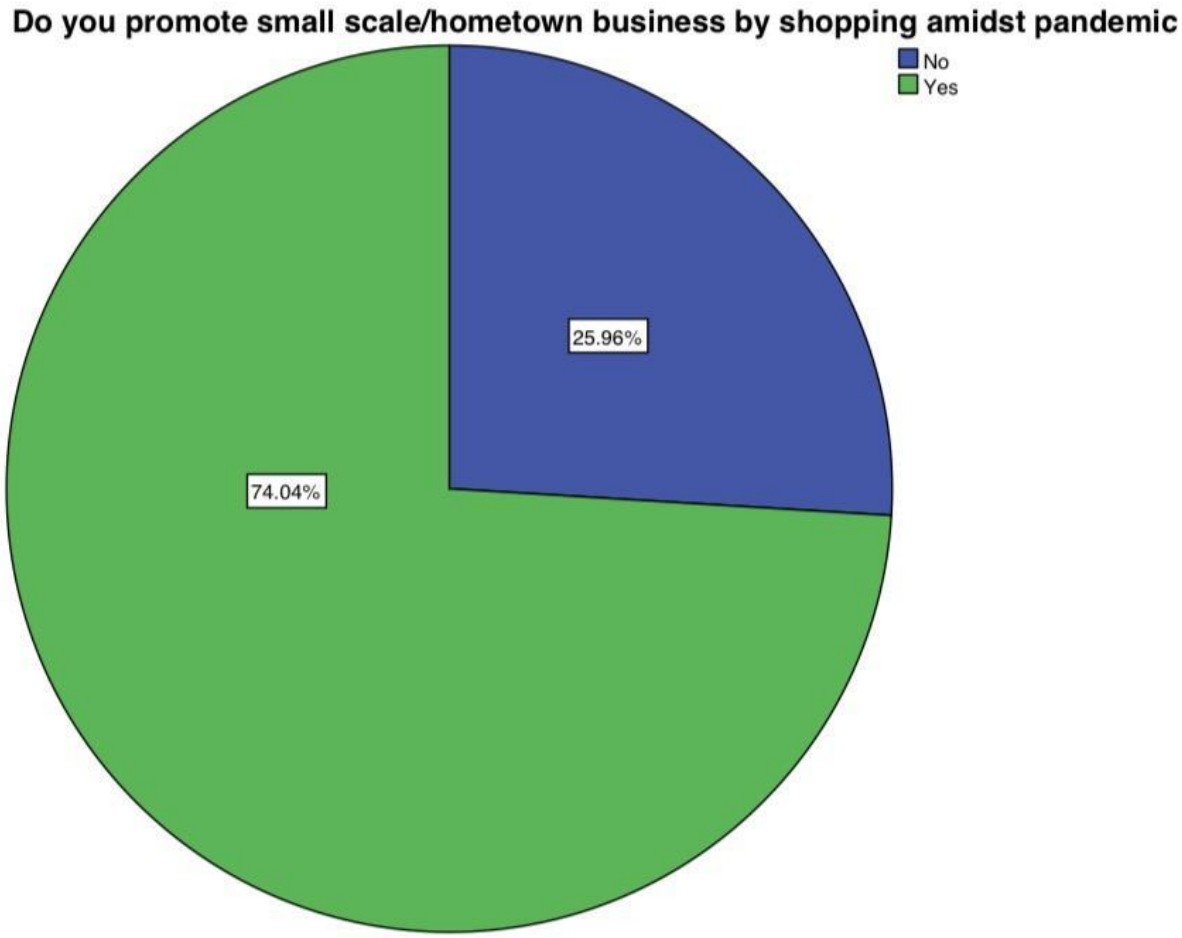

Figure7: Pie chart showing the percentage of students promoting small scale business.Majority of the participants (74%) responded yes (green) and remaining (25%) responded no (blue).

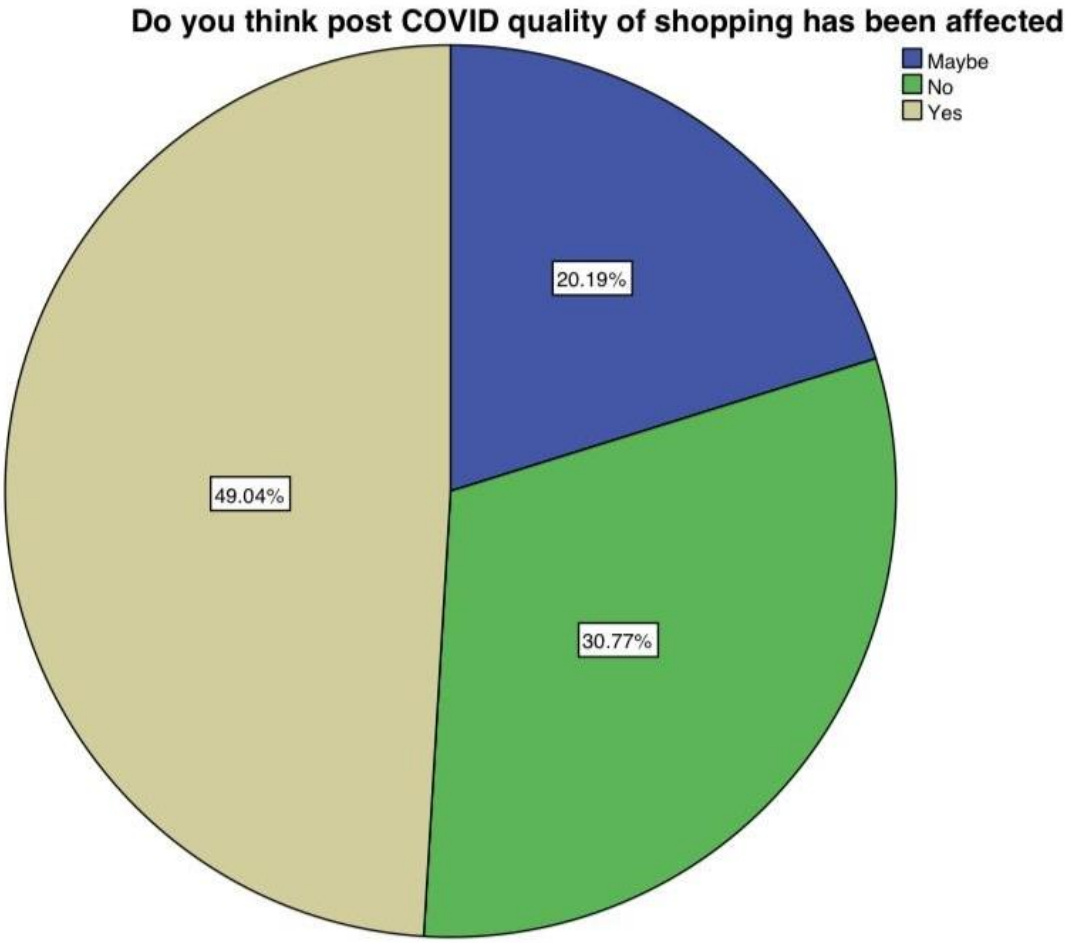

Figure 8 : Pie chart showing the percentage of participants thinking quality of shopping has been affected post COVID.Majority of the participants (49.04%%) responded yes (sandal) and remaining 20.19% responded maybe (blue) and 30.77% responded no (green).

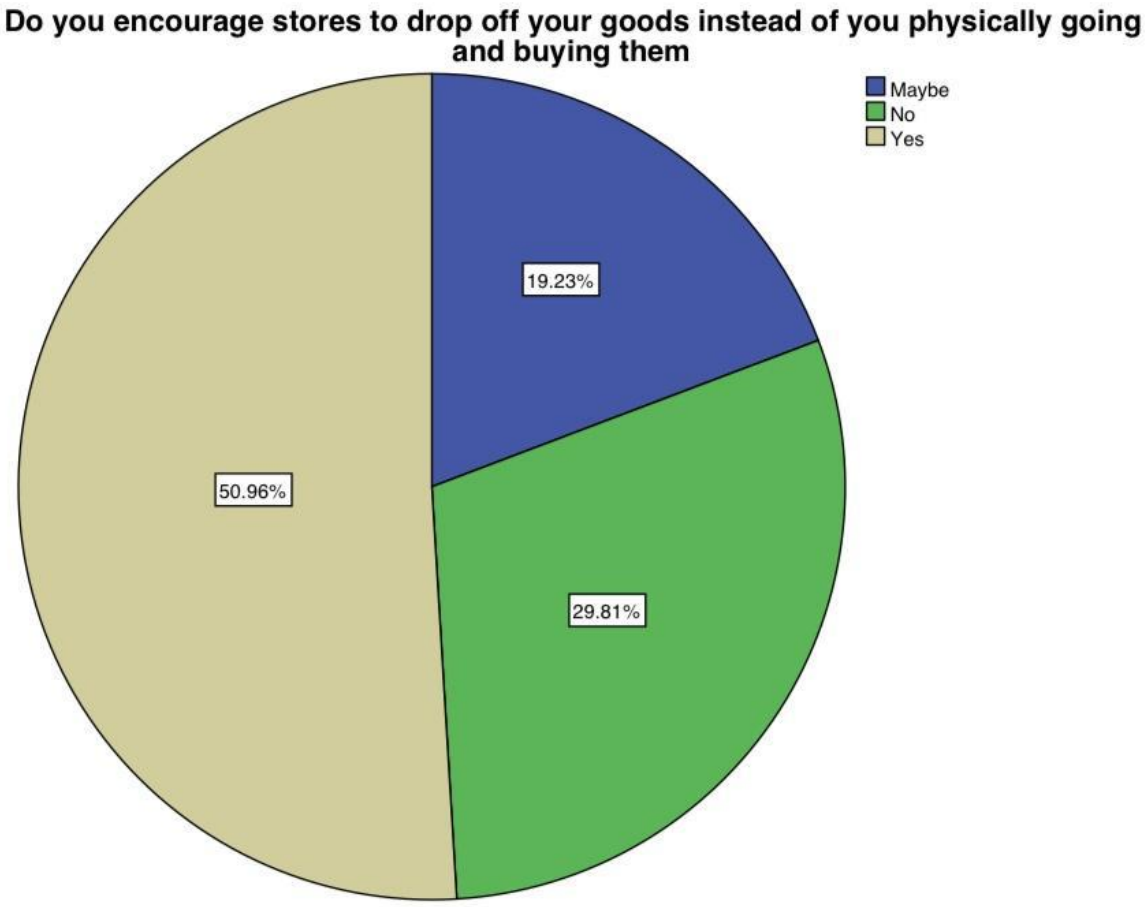

Figure 9: Pie chart showing the percentage of students encouraging stores to drop off goods at door step .Majority of the participants (50%) responded yes (sandal),19.38% responded maybe(blue) and remaining 29% responded no (green).

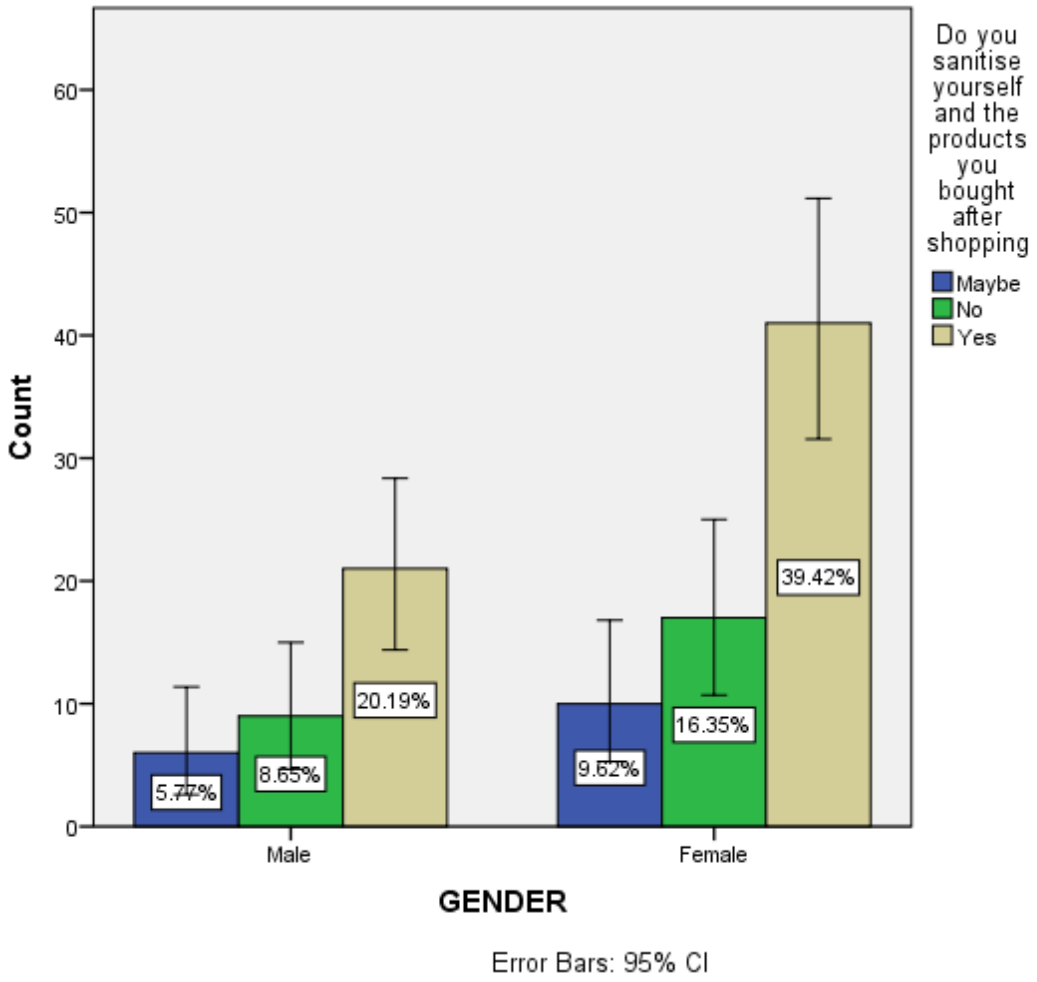

Figure 10: The above bar chart represents the frequency of people who sanitise after shopping. The x-axis represents the gender and responses (green for no, blue for maybe and sandal for yes) and the y-axis represents the number of participants. The p value = 0.00 statistically significant. This implies that there was a significant gender variation with the predominance of females in the participants who sanitise the purchased goods after shopping.

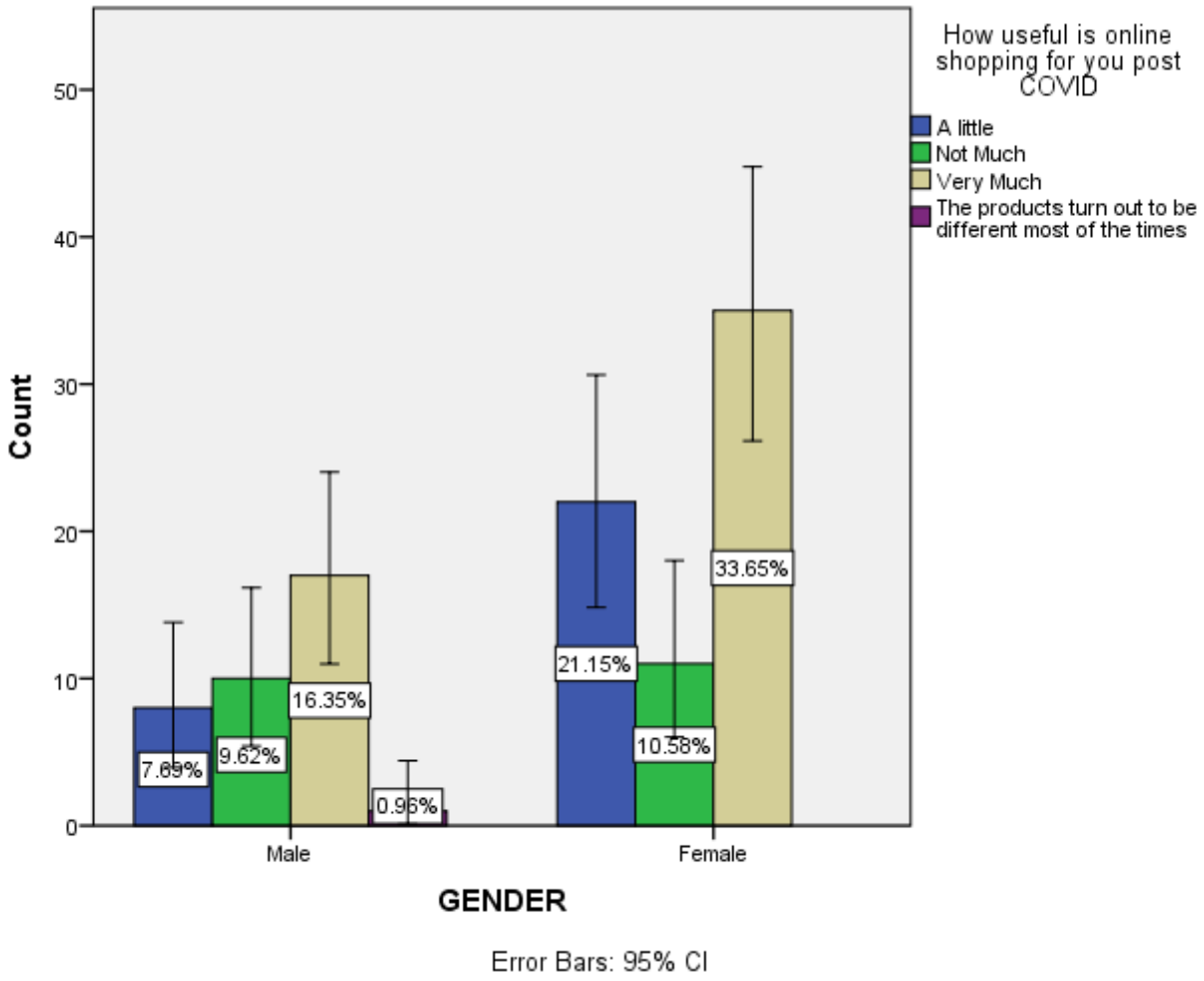

Figure 11: The above bar chart represents the comparison of values of online shopping practices between males and females. The x-axis represents the gender and responses (green for not much, blue for a little and sandal for very much) and the y-axis represents the number of participants . The p value = 0.00 statistically significant($p < 0.05$). This implies that there was a significant gender variation with predominance of females in the participants who prefer online shopping post covid.

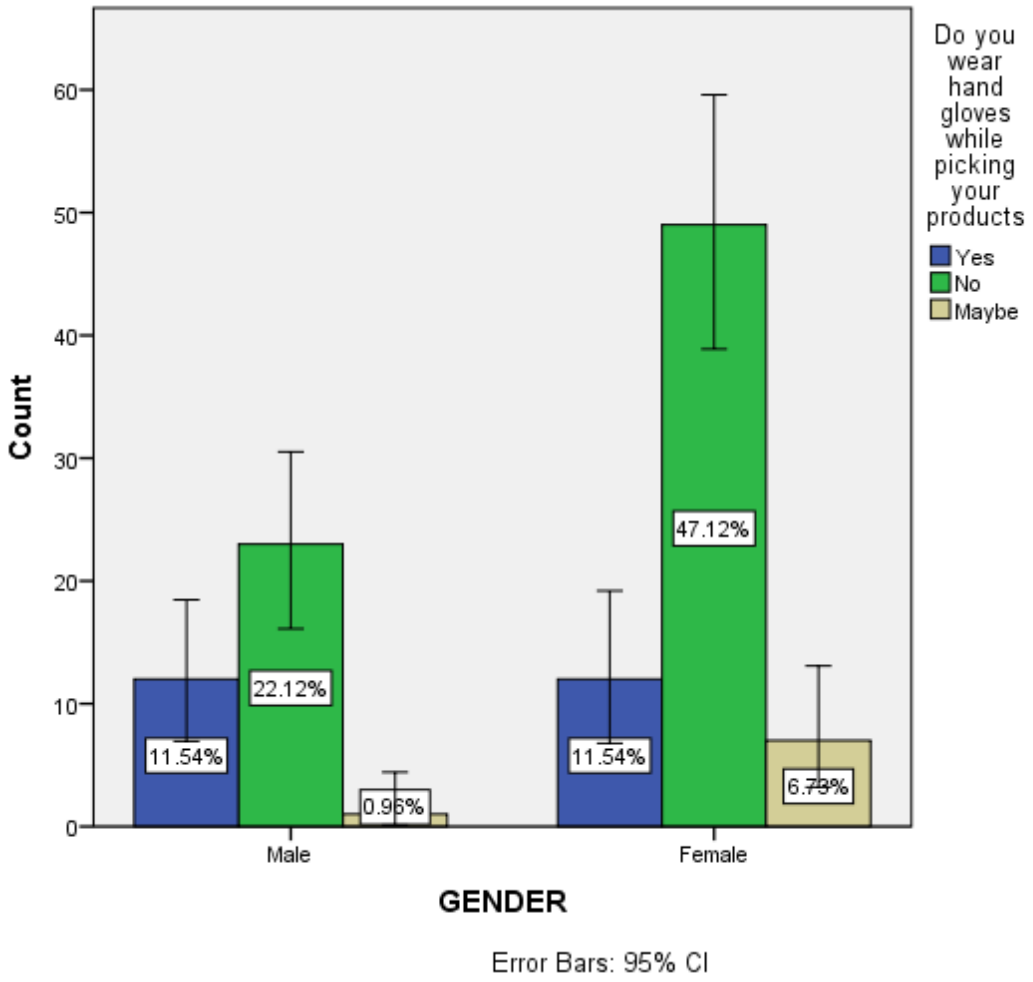

Figure 12 : The above bar chart represents the comparison regarding wearing hand gloves while shopping between males and females. The x-axis represents the gender and responses (green for not much, blue for a little and sandal for very much) and the y-axis represents the number of participants. The p value = 0.00 statistically significant($p<0.05$). This implies that there was a significant gender variation with a predominance of females in the participants who wear gloves while shopping.

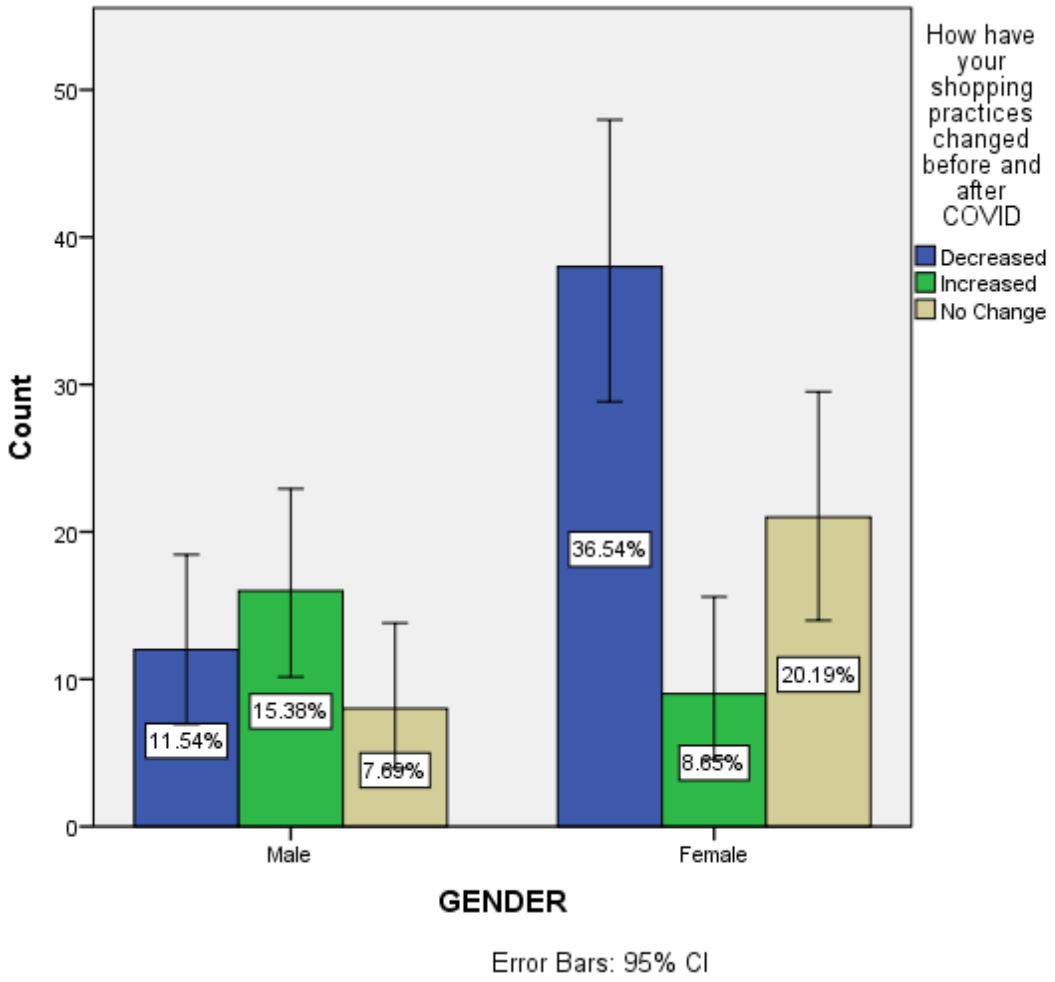

Figure 13 : The above bar chart represents the comparison regarding change in shopping practices between males and females. The x-axis represents the gender and responses (green for increased, blue for decreased and sandal for no change) and the y-axis represents the number of participants.The p value = 0.00 statistically significant($p<0.05$). This implies that there was a significant gender variation with a predominance of females reporting of change in the participants' shopping practices before and after covid.

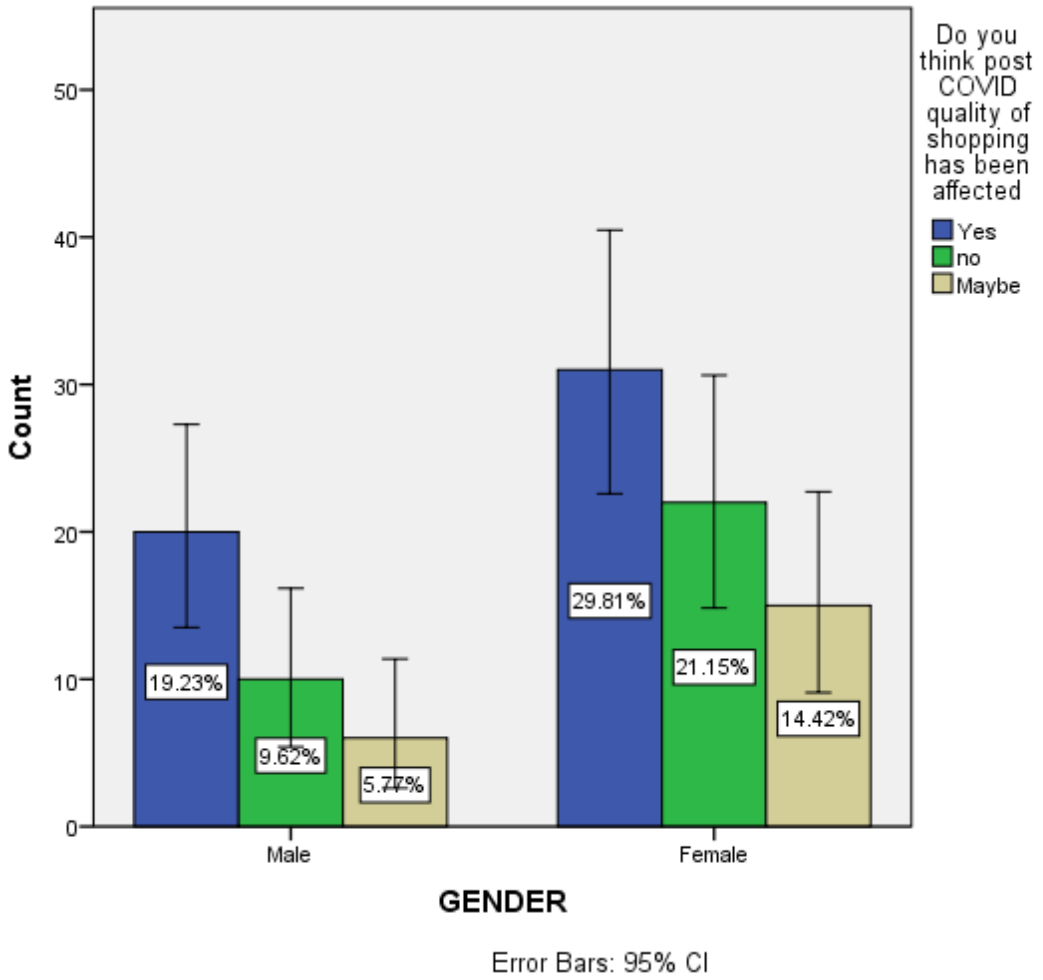

Figure 14 : The above bar chart represents the comparison regarding post covid quality of shopping between male and females. The x-axis represents the gender and responses (green for no, blue for maybe and sandal for yes) and the y-axis represents the number of participants. The p value = 0.00 statistically significant($p<0.05$). This implies that there was a significant gender variation in the participants' who think quality of shopping has been affected post covid.

DISCUSSION:

In the study we observed that females responded more than males and practiced more precautions such as wearing masks, social distancing, and sanitisation which was not practiced earlier. Majority (58.2%) were female respondents whereas males were 41.8%. Similar findings were found in other studies where three quarters of respondents were females (73.2%), and 26.5% males (29). Awareness regarding coronavirus among 97 interns were assessed of which 41 were males and 56 were females. 60% majority responded saying that they follow proper sanitisation methods while shopping, similar

findings were found in other articles where 67% majority responded saying that they practise sanitising .

In another study (30) it stated people do not follow proper sanitation techniques and 83% participants were under the poor sanitisation category which is the most common risk factor of COVID-19. Our findings are in concordance with other articles but there was slight variation in some other articles. About 83% majority participants responded 'yes' they wear masks while shopping, similar findings were found in (4) study 86.5% people responded yes they wear mask.Important to note that while the general public appears to be well informed regarding the common symptoms, 20% of the population excluded wearing masks. Our findings thereby were in concordance with other articles. 64.7% participants responded 'yes' they practice social distancing while shopping, similar findings are found in other articles stating that around 65% people practise social distancing while shopping . Similar findings were found in other articles stating that 65% participants practised social distancing (8). In (31) study 89% people responded 'yes' they practise social distancing. The social distance measure was found to be influential in discriminating shopping frequency groups for the two stores, providing evidence that people tend to avoid stores that are perceived as being socially distant from themselves. Social distancing involves keeping 1.5 m distance between people,which can prevent the spread , especially most respiratory infectious diseases. Social distancing is the most effective measure to reduce COVID-19 (10). Our findings were in concordance with other articles regarding social distancing. About 50% of participants encourage stores to drop off at home. Similar findings stated that out of 550 people, 346 people strongly agree to avoid going to the market (32). Our findings regarding people going out for shooping was in concordance with other articles. About 37.5% participants experienced increased stress and anxiety level due to COVID19. In the study by (33) it was stated that the anxiety score was 28% while the stress score was11.6% among participants post COVID. COVID-19 also caused various psychological effects , thereby finding its concordance with other articles.

The limitations of the study were that the Questionnaire was filled by people who understood English and possessed smartphones with internet connectivity. Uneducated people were not included in this survey. And the study was also restricted to urban society, thereby cannot be generalized to the whole community.Time duration for collecting data was less, time taken for an analysis and statistics was too long. The future scope is that there is an increase in awareness among the general public; since we know for sure that simple measures like better hand hygiene, safe practices, social distancing goes a long way in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 infection. Documenting such data can help the government formulate a better and effective shopping strategy to cope up with COVID-19.

CONCLUSION:

This study sheds light on the current level of awareness regarding safe shopping practices post COVID-19. It also ensures that it inculcates Knowledge, preventive practices, and preparedness to enable customers and shopkeepers to have safe practices. Therefore this article will ensure people take preventive steps while shopping thereby reducing the potential spread of the pandemic .

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

S Pragya : Literature search, data collection analysis, manuscript drafting.

Dr Gheena.S and Dr Sandhya : Data verification, manuscript drafting.

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