

We all make choices every time we buy a product or service. Once we decide to make a purchase, we might have to make decisions about the product price, quality, colour, or other considerations. Many consumers are also interested in knowing where the product comes from, how and under what conditions it was produced, as well as the environmental, economic and human impact of production. If we purchase a service, we may need to make decisions about price, quality, and from whom we will make the purchase.

Below are several theoretical consumer choice situations for you to think about. Do your choices really matter? What should you do? What are the possible implications of your choices?

Situation #1:

You want to go the United States for a weekend shopping trip. You have heard that clothes might be more fashionable and are a better price than in Manitoba. A member of your family, however, suggests that you should shop in Manitoba to support the Canadian economy and to help the clothing industry at home to become better.

What do you think? What are the economic implications if many Canadians go the United States for major shopping trips? Why should you not be able to save some money and shop elsewhere if you want? Does your decision make any difference to anyone?

Situation #2:

You purchase your shirts and jeans at a particular store because the clothes they carry are durable and cost less than at many other stores. Later you learn, however, that these garments are cheaper at this store because they are made with 'sweatshop labour' in developing countries.

What do you think? What might be the economic implications for Canada if much of our clothing comes from these factories? What might be the social and economic implications for developing countries if you purchase or do not purchase products made there? Will your choice make any difference?

Situation #3:

A major grocery chain in your town refuses to carry locally produced seasonal fruit such as strawberries and raspberries because it says that the supply is too small and unreliable. You have to purchase imported fruits unless you take the time and effort to drive to a smaller independent store or a roadside fruit stand to purchase the Canadian-produced product.



What do you think? Is it worth your time and effort to go to another store to buy local produce? What are the possible economic and social implications if many families purchase imported fruit rather than locally grown fruit? Does your decision make a difference to anyone?