

7. Influence Of Coronavirus (Covid-19) Outbreak on Consumers Shopping And Buying Behavior In India.

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Abstract

The research article focuses on the influence of Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic on the shopping behaviour of the consumers. The work is a theoretical research done by using the online sources of secondary data to analyse the consumer shopping behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 epidemic, which was linked to obligatory lockdowns and social isolation, has upset consumer purchasing and shopping pattern. The local small independent retailers showed the highest levels of resiliency in terms of consumer footfall, whereas shopping malls, supermarkets, and general stores lost the majority of their patronage. This resulted in major disruptions to the Indian market processing in retail as well as whole sale markets. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic consumers are now improvise and learn new habits of buying and shopping. If, however, consumer returns to their previous behaviours, new rules and guidelines will alter how they shop and make purchases of goods and services. Changes in the consumer base due to the pandemic, advancements in technology and creative thinking will also usher in new purchasing and shopping behaviours. This study suggests further scholarly research and policy making related to shopping behaviour of consumers during the COVID-19 outbreak in India.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, COVID-19, Shopping habits.

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INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic in Wuhan (China) in early January 2020, spread rapidly across China and bring 200 countries across the globe under threat by this deadly virus with highly tragic consequences. By the end of April of 2020 over 2.6 million cases of reported infections with in excess of 182,000 people dead (WHO, 2020). The lockdown throughout the contaminated regions had a major impact on the consumers and the retail sector across the globe (Feng and Fay, 2020; Evans, 2020). As a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, India reached at the third place in the world in terms of infected cases. Thus it became essential for the Government of India to impose a mandatory nation-wide self-quarantine between 23rd March and 15th May 2020. However the nationwide lockdown was enhanced, but by the terms of rate of contamination. Since then, a large number of nations in Europe and beyond have adopted similar measures to stop the virus's spread, limiting the travel of their residents (Chinazzi *et al.*, 2020; Hedgecoe *et al.*, 2020).

It was reported across the globe that the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has negative effects on every economic sector. The policies of government during COVID-19 pandemic have depressed the economy of every nation. As the consumer is regarded to be stockholder of every business. The mandatory shut down and social distancing has made a big upset to the consumer buying and shopping behaviour. It was well reported that COVID-19 has brought a major change in the consumer behaviour. Thus at every aspect of consumer behaviour from purchase, consumption and satisfaction of a product and service, the COVID-19 has brought vibrant changes. It's essential to understand how the COVID-19 has altered the consumer shopping behaviour. The present study reviews the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the consumer shopping behaviour. This study aims to expand on the present understanding of consumer purchasing behaviour in the face of a significant public health emergency. Research on supermarkets and shopping centres has mostly dominated this field. This study examines consumer purchase behaviour during the early stages of the COVID-19 epidemic from a consumer-centred perspective. The ramifications of the findings can be employed by the policy makers and market researchers now addressing the consequences of this rising epidemic. To

better understand past buying behaviours and familiar sources of shopping, as well as evidence of how switching took place, insights were sought as part of this study.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

The platform that allows customers to purchase or shop was limited by lockdown and social alienation. There were shortages and geographical restrictions as a result. Mobility shift and mobility deficit are issues that consumer face. Shopping, working, and going to school have all moved and become more localized at home. Additionally, since customers are not required to adhere to set timetables for going to work, school, shopping, or consuming, they have greater time freedom.

1. STOCKPILING

Stockpiling is a common reaction to managing the uncertainty of the future supply of products for basic needs. When a nation experiences hyperinflation or a mental depression as a result of a war or pandemic, it is customary. Consumers are hoarding necessities for everyday use during the current COVID-19 pandemic, which is causing short-term shortages and stockouts. Bread, food, rice, pulses, water, toilet paper, meat, and cleaning and disinfecting supplies are all included in this. This is the first immediate effect of the pandemic outbreak in India on consumer purchase behaviour.

2. IMPROVISATION:

Consumers learn to improvise when there are psychological constraints. In the process, the old habits of doing something are discarded and new habits are invented by the consumers. The corona virus unleashed the creativity and resilience of consumers. Now the consumer who use to buy and shop offline are preferring online shopping process. Future study should focus on improvisation as a means of managing shortages of goods or services. The Indian notion of “Jugaad” is the closest to improvisation. It entails creating workable solutions by getting past limitations imposed by societal conventions or governmental regulations.

3. PENT-UP DEMAND.

It's a situation in which demand for a product rises precipitously. This may occur during the times of pandemic, war and uncertainty in any region. Under such conditions the consumer tries to purchase more goods and services rather than in normal days, thus their is a stimulation in the demand of any product. Under such conditions the consumer shopping and buying behavior is newly habited than its older habits of shopping and buying.

4. EMBRACING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY.

The pandemic crises the consumers have adopted several new technologies and their applications. These technologies have lightened the consumer at the most forefront position. Under the current COVID-19 scenario of India we can see and observe that the consumers use different applications to purchase products online from the shopping malls, supermarkets and general stores. The obvious example is Zoom video services. Just to keep up with consumers with the internet have learned to purchase products by Zoom conferencing.

5. STORE COMES HOME

Due to complete lockdown in India and other nations, consumers are unable to go to the shopping malls, supermarkets and general stores. Instead, the store comes home. This reverses the flow for work, purchasing and consumption of consumers. Nowadays, consumers would rather buy everything online and have it delivered to their homes, including streaming services like Disney, Netflix, and Amazon Prime. Which is abandoning the peculiar routine of visiting actual brick-and-mortar stores? As a result, it is improving customer behaviour's customisation and ease.

6. BLURRING OF WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES.

By the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic consumers are prisoners at home through mandatory lockdown and social distancing. This has limited the space for discrete activities such as working, shopping, learning, and socialization at a same place. Thus it

has given rise to the blurring of the work-life of the consumers. This is comparable to having too many demands and wishes but not enough money. As a result, the lines separating work from home and between chores and conversations are becoming increasingly hazy. To increase efficiency and effectiveness at home, some form of routine and compartmentalization are required.

7. DISCOVERY OF TALENT.

With more time to spare at home, consumers have tried new recipes, developed their skills, and demonstrated inventive and novel methods for playing music, sharing knowledge, and engaging in more imaginative online shopping. Consumers are turning into producers with potential commercial opportunities as a result of some of them becoming viral. Videos with the potential to be innovative and profitable abound on YouTube and its competitors.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

COVID-19 outbreak has given rise to the change in consumers buying behavior. There are three main managerial implications from the impact of Covid-19 on consumer behavior

- First, in the same way that consumer has become more adaptable and resourceful in the face of a pandemic.
- A further managerial impact is supply and demand alignment. Due to stockpiling and the “run on the bank” mindset of consumers during a crisis, there were persistent shortages at every merchant, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, and medicine stores. The integration of supply chain, logistics, and warehousing activities with the unpredictable swings in demand is necessary.
- A third management lesson is that, unless technology like; online buying and Zoom video services—makes a big difference in the lives of the users, they will revert to their previous behaviors.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It has been clear that there are differences in the readiness and response of different nations and their populations towards natural calamities including COVID-19 pandemic. The susceptibility of the shopping pattern has landed a consumer on deserted platform, where from a consumer even doesn't know how to shop, where to shop and when to shop. Under such circumstances the policy makers have a main role to play, also the role of the marketing researchers can't be avoided. The consumer's reaction for shopping during these pandemic crises is also an important question to be noted. A significant number of governments worldwide, including the Indian government, responded to the COVID-19 outbreak and ensuing global pandemic by closing down establishments such as supermarkets, shopping centres, restaurants, cafes, bars, and traditional pubs. This had a profound effect on the service industry, particularly on the catering, hospitality, and food retail sectors as well as their broader supply chains. Similarly, governments in India and other countries used social distance and self-quarantine measures, albeit the degree of these efforts differed greatly between states. One of the most important conclusions from this COVID-19 epidemic is that customers' major response was to move their food purchasing to online channels; this tendency was imitated in a number of other nations where internet shopping and home delivery were the options available.

According to Kirby-Hawkins et al. (2019), consumer adoption of online shopping was showing distinct patterns long in advance of the COVID-19 pandemic. The older, less mobile, wealthier, and less tech-savvy shoppers who have been most impacted by government "lock-down" policies related to the COVID-19 crisis were not particularly favoured by any of those trends, which further exacerbated the fact that many of these groups certainly more elderly consumers remain particularly vulnerable to this pandemic in terms of their physical and mental health. Online food orders have grown more challenging to transport to homes since there aren't enough delivery windows available, especially because the majority of internet users are often younger, richer, and under time pressure. This frequently has an impact, especially on the more disadvantaged populations included here. To understand how these dynamics are affecting consumers, more research is necessary. Specifically, it will be important to determine whether an increasing number of elderly people are being forced to leave their homes and purchase food from markets, supermarkets, or local shops, which increases their risk of contracting the virus. Ethnic



minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups face similar challenges, since mounting data indicates that they have been disproportionately impacted by the epidemic in the US, UK, and other European nations. Future studies on policy must undoubtedly examine how the most impacted might reliably receive necessities in the event of a pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study has attempted to offer an insight to the change in the shopping behavior of consumers by the COVID-19 outbreak in India. As we have stressed, many people - most of whom would not go on to be affected by the pathogen - were advised to self-quarantine thus giving rise to the physiological depression to the consumers who usually use to shop in shopping malls and supermarkets. As in Delhi, Mumbai ,Kolkata, Pune and other major cities affected by the coronavirus, this involved a sudden, immediate and major disruption to one of the most common market processes of the country. This research note, albeit not in a conclusive manner, attempts to nevertheless shed some light on how the consumer's behaviour was influenced by COVID-19, and what were the developments which cause change in the shopping behaviour of the consumer.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of Interest

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