



INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has made a tremendous change in the day-to-day life of every people in the world. COVID-19 has locked people in their houses and disconnects the connection with outsiders, friends and families. This increases the usage of social media and online technologies. This paper aims to find out the factors influenced consumers buying behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected through questionnaire from 125 respondents. Convenience sampling method is used for this research and tools like Percentage, 5 Point Likert scale, Friedman Test and Chi-square analysis are used to analyse the data. The finding reveals that there is high influence in consumer's buying behaviour during COVID-19 and people have started buying necessary goods with more conscious on cost, the awareness for health and hygiene products has increased and there is a reduction in spending money on entertainments.

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1010

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has affected every possible aspect of life. Its pernicious impact did not spare even consumption, whose determinants were affected, including people's health and financial well-being, which has suffered paradoxically, despite pandemic containment efforts (Gerlich, M. 2021, september)ⁱ. After the emergence of COVID-19, this is a health and economic crisis that caused a change in attitudes, behaviors, and buying habits of consumers. Online shopping is on the rise because of this virus, people avoid going out, keeping a social distance, and shopping

from home. The growing threat of this virus is a public health crisis and hinders macroeconomics as a whole. Due to the fear of exposure in open spaces with people, it is clear that they have practiced the way of buying online for products they needed or demanded by not bypassing any product (Ali Ismajli, A. M, et al. 2021, 7 20)ⁱⁱ. Right from the beginning of the pandemic, a large number of empirical studies have been published, for instance the study by Naeem (2020) has argued that during the COVID-19 pandemic the use of social media has affected customer psychology by improving its capacity to take optimal consumption decisions. In the same vein, the



study by Mason et al. (2020) analyzes the alteration of consumer needs in the USA during the lockdown. The authors illustrated that the changes have affected both purchasing behavior and post-purchase satisfaction (Annarita Sorrentino, D. L. 2021, Dec 7)ⁱⁱⁱ

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Samuli Laato, A. N. et al. (2020)^{iv}. studies about "Unusual purchasing behavior during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic: The stimulus-organism-response approach". The research was based on two behavioral responses: unusual purchases and voluntary self-isolation. The study was carried out using PLS-SEM analysis. The findings show a strong link between self-intention to self-isolate and intention to make unusual purchases, providing empirical evidence that the reported consumer behavior was directly linked to anticipated time spent in self-isolation. The results further revealed exposure to online information sources led to increased information overload and cyberchondria. Information overload was also a strong predictor of cyberchondria. Perceived severity of the situation and cyberchondria had significant impacts on people's intention to make unusual purchases and voluntarily self-isolate. The researcher also suggested that future research is needed to confirm the long-term effects of the pandemic on consumer and retail services.

Sudhashini Nair, G. M. (2021)^v. This research "Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Malaysia" aims to examine the relationships of variables such as perceived severity, cyberchondria, self-efficacy, and self-isolation on consumer behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia. The reliability, linearity, normality, correlation, and multiple regression tests were conducted using SPSS. The study results revealed that only perceived severity and self-isolation had significant relationships with consumer behavior. The

scientific novelty of the study was that both cyberchondria and self-efficacy were insignificant. These findings imply that both cyberchondria and self-efficacy do not affect the consumer behaviour of Malaysian during the pandemic.

Thomas Bilaliib Udimal et al, (2021)^{vi}. has studied on "The impact of COVID-19 on consumers' eating and purchasing habits of agricultural products in China: key determinants and policy implications". The researcher has examined the change in consumer's eating and purchasing habits during COVID-19 period. The findings shows that the respondents are much concerned about the countries of origin when buying imported frozen foods due to the reported cases of COVID-19 in the imported frozen foods, and the preference for locally produced foods has increased due to COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has changed peoples eating and purchasing behaviour as they are now careful about where and what they eat and make purchase. The respondents also indicated that they have stopped visiting cold-chain food stores due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the findings the researcher has concluded that, COVID-19 has negatively affected the eating and purchasing habits of consumers, the development which has the potential of affecting food industry negatively

3. OBJECTIVES

- To measure the level of influence of COVID-19 on consumers buying behaviour.
- To find out the factors influencing consumer's buying behaviour during COVID-19.

4. HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no association between gender and factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19.



5. METHODOLOGY

The data were collected from 125 respondents through a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from journals, e-books, articles and transcripts. The researcher opted for a convenience sampling method as it suits this type of study. Statistical tools used in the research include Percentage analysis, 5point Likert scale, Friedman Test, and Chi-square test. Data analysis was done using SPSS software.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Representation

The table below presented the demographic profile of the respondents such as Age, Gender, Marital status, income of the respondents etc., Percentage method is used to analyse the socio-economic background of the consumers.

Table 1-Demographic Representation

S. No	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Age	below 25	20	16.0
		26-50	54	43.2
		51-75	44	35.2
		Above 75	7	5.6
		Total	125	100.0
2.	Gender	Male	24	19.2
		Female	101	80.8
		Total	125	100.0
3.	Marital status	Married	87	69.6
		Unmarried	38	30.4
		Total	125	100.0
4.	Education	Illiterate	20	16.0
		School level	16	12.8
		Degree holder	43	34.4
		ITI / Diploma	36	28.8
		Professional course	10	8.0
		Total	125	100.0
5.	Employment status	Agriculture	2	1.6
		Worker	32	25.6
		Private employee	40	32.0
		Government Employee	13	10.4
		Business	13	10.4
		Profession	25	20.0
		Total	125	100.0
6.	Income	Up to 25,000	71	56.8
		25,001-50,000	33	26.4
		50,001-75,000	8	6.4
		Above 75,000	13	10.4
		Total	125	100.0
7.	Type of family	Nuclear family	74	59.2

1012

		Joint family	51	40.8
		Total	125	100.0
8.	Area of Residence	Rural	39	31.2
		Urban	86	68.8
		Total	125	100.0

**Source: Primary Data
 Inference**

Table (1) explains the demographic profile of the respondents. Majority (80.8) percentage of the respondents were female and majority (43.2) percentage of them were between the age group of (26-50). (69.7) percentage of the respondents were married and (34.4) percentage of the respondents were degree holders. (32) percentage of the respondents were private employees and majority (56.8)

percentage of them were earned an income up to Rs. 25,000. (59.6) percentage are from nuclear family and (68.8) percentage of the respondents are from urban area.

6.2 Level of influence of COVID-19 on buying behaviour of consumers

The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed consumers purchasing behaviour. The researcher has used percentage analysis to study whether COVID-19 has influenced their purchasing behaviour.

Table 2:Level of influence of COVID-19 on the buying behaviour of consumers

S. No	Influence	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Not at all influential	4	3.2
2.	Slightly influential	18	14.4
3.	Somewhat influential	25	20.0
4.	Highly influential	47	37.6
5.	Extremely influential	31	24.8
	Total	125	100.0

**Source: Primary Data
 Inference**

The above Table (2) shows the level of influence of COVID-19 on the buying behaviour of consumers. The result shows that out of 125 respondents 47 (37.6 percent) respondents says that COVID-19 has highly influenced the buying behaviour of consumers. 31 (24.8 percentage) of the respondent's states that COVID-19 has extremely influenced in buying behaviour of consumers. 25 (20.0) percentage of the respondents has somewhat influenced. 18 (14.4 percentage) of the respondents has slightly influenced and only 4 (3.2 percentage) of the respondents has says that COVID-19 has not at

all influenced their buying behaviour. It clearly states that COVID-19 has influenced the buying behaviour of consumers.

6.3 Factors influenced the consumer's buying behaviour during COVID-19

Various factors have influenced consumers purchasing decision.Consumer's buying pattern, health conscious and priorities in buying has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors that influenced or changed consumer's buying behaviour due to COVID-19 pandemic has ranked using Friedman Test.

1013



Table 3: Factors influenced the consumer’s buying behaviour during COVID-19

S. No	Factors	N	Mean Rank	Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
1.	Cost conscious on necessary needs	125	6.43	I	281.199**	<.001
2.	Awareness towards health and hygiene products	125	6.08	II		
3.	Affected family earnings and livings	125	5.82	III		
4.	Spending time with family	125	5.38	IV		
5.	Adoption of technology	125	4.89	V		
6.	COVID-19 has changed the lifestyle	125	4.85	VI		
7.	COVID-19 has reduced the affordability of buying products	125	4.8	VII		
8.	Food wastage	125	4.63	VIII		
9.	Spending money on entertainment	125	2.13	IX		

1014

Source: Primary Data

Inference

It is evident from Table (3) that “Cost conscious on necessary needs” play a major role and secured first rank in influencing consumers purchasing behaviour during COVID-19 with a mean rank of (6.43) followed by “Awareness towards health and hygiene products” with a mean rank of (6.08). “Affected family earnings and livings” ranked third with a mean rank of (5.82) and “Spending money on entertainment” gets the least rank in influencing consumers purchasing behaviour with a mean rank of

(2.13). The analysis inferred that “Cost conscious on necessary needs” is the major factor that influence consumer behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic.

6.3.1 Association between Gender and factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no association between gender and factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19.

Table 3.1 Association between gender and factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19.

S. No	H_0 : Null Hypothesis	Chi-Square	p-value	H_0 : Accepted / Rejected
1.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Cost conscious on necessary needs	148.640	<.001**	Rejected
2.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Awareness towards health and hygiene products	129.840	<.001**	Rejected
3.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Food wastage	83.520	<.001**	Rejected
4.	There is no significant relationship between	84.640	<.001**	Rejected



	gender and Spending time with family			
5.	There is no significant relationship between gender and COVID-19 has changed the lifestyle	66.320	<.001**	Rejected
6.	There is no significant relationship between gender and COVID-19 has reduced the affordability of buying products	37.200	<.001**	Rejected
7.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Spending money on entertainment	46.960	<.001**	Rejected
8.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Affected family earnings and livings	95.440	<.001**	Rejected
9.	There is no significant relationship between gender and Adoption of technology	39.920	<.001**	Rejected

1015

Source: Primary Data

**Significant at one Percent level

Inference

Chi-square test is applied to test the statistical association between factors influencing consumer behaviour and gender. The results from the Table (3.1) revealed that there is a considerable relationship among “Cost conscious on necessary needs”, “Awareness towards health and hygiene products”, “Affected family earnings and livings”, “Spending time with family”, “Adoption of technology”, “COVID-19 has changed the lifestyle”, “COVID-19 has reduced the affordability of buying products”, “Food wastage”, “Spending money on entertainment” among “gender” as the p value is less than 0.05 percent. Hence, the null hypothesis rejected and inferred that there is an association between factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19 among gender.

7. FINDINGS

- From the study it shows that 80.8 % of the respondents are female and most of them are between the age group of 26-50.
- Out of 125 respondents 69.6 % of the respondents are married and 34.4 % of them are degree holders.

- The study on employment and income shows that 32% of the respondents are private employees and earning an income of up to Rs. 25,000.
- The study reveals that 59.2 % of the respondents belongs to nuclear family and 68.8 % of the respondents are from urban area.
- The study on level of influence reveals that 37.6% of the respondent’s buying behaviour are highly influenced and 24.8 % of the respondent’s buying behaviour are extremely influenced by COVID-19.
- By applying mean score ranking method Cost conscious on necessary needs, Awareness towards health and hygiene products and Affected family earnings and livings are ranked as the major three factors that influenced consumer’s buying behaviour during COVID-19.
- By applying chi-square test, the null hypothesis gets rejected and it is inferred that there is an association between factors influencing consumer behaviour during COVID-19 among gender.

8. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the researcher carried out a questionnaire survey to understand the influence of COVID-19 and the data reveals interesting results. The data and analysis taken by the researcher is a biggest contribution to the consumer behaviour study in future. This study helps in finding out the level of influence of covid-19 on consumer behaviour and the key factors that shift and drive the consumer's buying behaviour to an extent. COVID-19 pandemic has a significant influence on consumer behaviour. People started to spend only on necessary products. It shows that COVID-19 has taught the consumers about the value of money and spending pattern. People also got awareness about health and hygiene products through this COVID-19 pandemic and peoples have completely avoided spending money on entertainments.

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