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MATRIC NO; 18/LAW01/161

COLLEGE; LAW

DEPARTMENT; LAW

COURSE TITLE; CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR II

COURSE CODE; BUS 208

DATE:8th April, 2020

**QUESTIONS**

**In not less than 2000 words, Explain explicitly how the pandemic (COVID 19) has affected consumer buying behavior.**

**WHAT IS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ?**

Before we can explain or discuss the effect of the pandemic, covid 19, it seems necessary to define the key terms which will be used and later explained in the essay. Firstly, consumer behavior is defined or seen as the study of individual(s), groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services including the consumers emotional, mental , and behavioral responses that precede or follow the activities.

 **WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?**

Coronavirus is an infectious disease caused by a newly found discovered virus. It is a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome(MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome(SARS). Symptoms such as fever, cough, and breathing difficulties occur and in more severe cases, pneumonia kidney failure and even death.

 There is however no specific treatment for the disease and therefore been labeled a pandemic, due to the amount of deaths which have been recorded all over the world and the fact that no cure has been discovered though these symptoms can be treated based on the patients clinical condition and supportive care, which has come a long way for infected persons are highly effective. With the need to curb this virus, quarantine and social distancing have been applied as the disease can be transmitted from person to person , usually after close contact with a patient , mostly through saliva drops and fluid from the body.

 **ORIGIN OF CORONAVIRUS**

Scientists have known of the human coronavirus since the 1960s. But only rarely has it garnered wider recognition over the past half a century.Coronavirus, any virus belonging to the family Coronaviridae. Coronaviruses have enveloped virions (virus particless) that measure approximately 120 nm (1 nm = 10−9 metre) in diameter. Club-shaped glycoprotein spikes in the envelope give the viruses a crownlike, or coronal, appearance. The nucleocapsid, made up of a protein shell known as a capsid and containing the viral nucleic acids, is helical or tubular. The coronavirus genome consists of a single strand of positive-sense RNA (ribonucleic acid).In humans, a species known as SARS coronavirus (or Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus) causes a highly contagious respiratory disease that is characterized by symptoms of fever, cough, and muscle ache, often with progressive difficulty in breathing.

 The virus emerged in humans in 2002; it likely jumped to humans from an animal reservoir, believed to be horseshoe bats. The ability of SARS(Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)coronavirus to jump to humans undoubtedly required genetic changes in the virus. These changes are suspected to have occurred in the palm civet, since the SARS virus present in horseshoe bats is unable to infect humans directly.

 In 2012 another coronavirus capable of causing a severe acute respiratory illness later known as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) was discovered in humans. The first case was found in Saudi Arabia, and others were reported within the following year in France, Germany, Jordan, Qatar, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. All confirmed cases were directly or indirectly linked to the Middle East. Of all confirmed cases documented by 2019, roughly one-third had ended in death. The novel MERS coronavirus was similar to other coronaviruses known to have originated in bats and was thought to be passed from bats to other animals before being transmitted to humans.

 In late 2019 a virus apparently closely related to SARS coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China. The Wuhan coronavirus, later named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), caused an illness known as COVID-19, which was similar to SARS and was being characterized primarily by fever and respiratory symptoms. The virus was likewise highly contagious. By early 2020 it had spread throughout regions of China and had reached the United States and Europe, having been carried by travelers from affected regions. In March the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a pandemic.The WHO officially declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Countries experiencing the greatest number of cases include China, Iran, Italy, and the Republic of Korea. Although the United States ranks eighth, currently, with under 2,000 confirmed cases, insufficient testing does not provide a clear and complete picture

**HOW CAN CORONAVIRUS BE PREVENTED?**

 The disease caused by an infection with SARS-CoV-2 is called COVID-19, which stands for coronavirus disease 2019.In spite of the global panic in the news about this virus, a person is unlikely to contract SARS-CoV-2 unless he or she has been in contact with someone who has a SARS-CoV-2 infection. As we know there is currently no treatment specifically approved for COVID-19, and no cure for an infection, although treatments and vaccines are currently under study. Instead, treatment focuses on managing symptoms as the virus runs its course.The best way to prevent the spread of infection is to avoid or limit contact with people who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or any respiratory infection.The next best thing one can do is practice good hygiene and social distancing to prevent bacteria and viruses from spreading.If you’re out in a public setting where it’s difficult to follow social distancing guidelines, medical personnels recommend that one should wear a cloth face mask that covers the mouth and nose. When worn correctly, and by large percentages of the public, these masks can help to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2.That’s because they can block the respiratory droplets of people who may be asymptomatic or people who have the virus but have gone undiagnosed. Respiratory droplets get into the air when you exhale, talk, cough, or sneeze.

Keep in mind that wearing a mask isn’t a replacement for other preventive measures, such as frequent handwashing and practicing social distancing. All of them are important and also certain people shouldn’t wear face masks. They include children under 2 years old, people with trouble breathing, and people who are unable to remove their masks.

**STATISTICS**

Currently,210 Countries and Territories around the world have reported a total of 1,779,099 confirmed cases of the coronavirus COVID-19 that originated from Wuhan, China, and a death toll of 108,770 deaths.In Nigeria, there are 318 confirmed cases, 70 have been discharged and 10 deaths have been recorded.

 **HOW HAS CORONAVIRUS BEEN AFFECTING THE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVOUR ?**

 The challenges facing the world right now are shaking up global economies, pushing healthcare systems to their limits, and upheaving people’s daily lives.Currently, more than one-third of the world’s population is under some form of lockdown. To put it simply: there isn’t a business, government, or person that hasn’t felt the effects of coronavirus, even to some degree. One very noticeable impact of the outbreak is its influence on how and what people purchase. This is having a knock-on effect on various industries and key groups. While the full marketing impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on consumer buying habits, brands and agencies is largely unknown, there are many factors that will guide short-term decision making. There are still many uncertainties as to how the next few months will impact the global community, both professionally and personally, so it is essential to look at both spectrums to make educated decisions regarding marketing investments.

When making decisions on advertising campaigns, the two primary areas to consider are changing consumer behaviors and impacts on individual industries (from supply chains to point of sales). Strategically thinking through the below thought-starters will be crucial in making the right decision for your brand or clients.

**HOW INDUSTRIES ARE AFFECTED**

1). While there is a potential benefit for delivery companies previously mentioned, other services such as Uber, Airbnb, public transit, air travel, and companies that put people in close proximity to others will potentially face challenges, as users are choosing to avoid close contact in exchange for staying home. This will not only impact those company’s bottom lines but also their employees’ work schedules and employment status.

2).Industries or companies that are supply-chain reliant on Asia, Europe, or other highly affected areas might encounter shipment slowdowns. Understanding current product inventory and future production ramifications will be important in planning marketing campaigns throughout the next few months.

3). Businesses need to produce clear direction on how they will proceed in light of the Coronavirus. As the overall concern for personal health continues to grow, brands will be forced to communicate how they are not only taking precautions with their own employees but also how quality control mechanisms are increasing to ensure no contamination or spread of the virus to their consumers.

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOR SHIFTS AND IMPACT**

* As many people opt to remain in their homes, delivery services like Amazon, UberEats, and DoorDash are likely to see increases in demand due to their ability to provide products and services directly to the consumer’s door.
* With the economic downturn, consumer behavior is likely to change drastically. For those without significant disposable income, those planning for or are in retirement, and for small business owners, an economic downturn might result in a sharp decline in their propensity to spend. While consumers could take a “wait and see” approach, advertisers should consider their target audience and how their buying habits may change as a result of the current economic climate. Marketers should continue to look at their performance data and quickly adjust campaigns as needed.
* **Travel purchases are taking the brunt**:More expensive purchases, and those that involve travel, are the most likely to be delayed while the outbreak is still ongoing. For example, 41% of global consumers have delayed purchasing vacations and holidays. This rises to 53% in China, a country that has been in lockdown for over 6 weeks and is only starting to re-emerge on the other side.Interestingly, even though they’re not as prohibitive with their own plans, Japanese consumers are the least optimistic of all markets surveyed that their country and the world will overcome the coronavirus outbreak.
* **Medical supplies are in high demand**:Face masks (45%) and hand sanitizer gel (30%) are the top items globally that consumers are struggling to purchase. By country, Japan sees the highest struggle to buy face masks at 78%, while the Philippines struggles the most to purchase hand sanitizer gel at 70%. This is a common occurrence across most countries. Google searches for hand sanitizer have skyrocketed, while many pharmacies and stores have sold out. With the increased demand, Amazon and Walmart sellers have also been criticized for price gouging But some brands have been lending a hand. Louis Vuitton owner, LVMH, started making hand sanitizer to meet demand and SpaceX is also manufacturing its own hand sanitize and face shields with plans to donate materials to hospitals
* **Consumers are struggling to buy essentials:**Many of us are now familiar with the sight of empty supermarket shelves, devoid of the essentials we usually buy. Fear has undoubtedly taken over consumer’s usual shopping behaviors. Pasta, toilet rolls, hand sanitizer, and other long-life foods are just some of the products that consumers have been loading up on in recent weeksRetailers are facing the level of demand that’s typically seen around Christmas time, which unlike now, is expected and they have time to plan for. Many retailers say they have enough food supplies, but they’re struggling to get items into stores as fast as consumers are purchasing them.On the other hand,data shows that Australians are struggling the most to buy fundamental household and food items. Two-thirds of Australian consumers say they’re struggling to buy essential household items like toilet rolls, compared to just 8% in China and 7% in Italy.
* **Online delivery and click-and-collect services continue to attract new users**
* **Digital streaming:**While less about the immediacy of protecting and feeding themselves, it comes as no surprise that as people are homebound and no longer pursuing external entertainment options that there is an increase in digital streaming services. In addition to streaming services like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, and Disney+ seeing atypical gains in subscribers in the first quarter of 2020, non-traditional streaming services like movie studios are releasing media streaming, on-demand, sometimes earlier than projected release.

 In conclusion, one should realise that as the impact of COVID-19 continues to unfold, brands and agencies need to keep a close eye on the changing consumer behaviors and impacts on individual industries to ask the right questions, ensure they are prepared for any outcomes and find new opportunities.

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