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QUESTION: in not less than 2000 words, explain explicitly how the pandemic (COVID-19) has affected consumer buying behavior.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID 19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those without underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer and more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID 19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID 19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it is important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, coughing into a flexed elbow).

At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID 19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments.

The advent of corona virus in our various countries and communities has also brought along with it lots of problem that affect our consumer buying behavior. But before we go further, we have to establish what consumer buying behavior is.

A consumer is an individual who pays some amount of money for the thing required to consume goods and services. As such, consumers play a vital role in the economic system of a nation. Without consumer demand, producers would lack one of the key motivations to produce: to sell to consumers.

Consumer buying behavior is the sum total of a consumers attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer’s behavior in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service. The study of consumer behavior draws upon social science disciplines of anthropology, psychology, sociology, and economics.

Amid all the uncertainty and calls for social distancing, some industries will be affected more than the others. Restaurants and bars are particularly vulnerable, as well as event spaces and retail stores. At the same time, consumers shifting their spending habits and some companies and product categories are growing. While circumstances continue to evolve each day, according to research, most people say they will shop online more in the next two weeks and 51 percent said they will continue their normal grocery buying.

Coronavirus has also affected consumer buying behavior in the following ways:

**GROCERY SALES ARE GOING UP**

In the purchases of shelf stable grocery items have grown substantially in the last few days including **rice, flour, canned and jarred vegetables, canned and peppered beans and canned and dry milk** compared to the first four weeks of January. And it makes sense: these items are made for tough times when people may need to hunker down. They have a long shelf life, are versatile, and are offered in large formats, making it easy to stock up on ingredients that last. This is because as people are stocking up on ingredients they have to purchase those that can last up to three weeks or more depending on the period of the lock down. Take for instance, if one purchases 3 raw fishes and three canned fishes, the canned one may last longer than the raw, uncooked one as the shelf life is not guaranteed.

The consumers buying behavior has been influenced in the sense that a family, for instance, may buy groceries every week or every two weeks in small or medium quantity is now forced to buy more than is required for them, they stock up on shelf stable grocery products in order to survive.

**THE PURCHASE OF MEDICAL SUPPLY INCREASES**

After the outbreak of the widespread virus, it is no longer news the precautions to be taken to prevent the spread of the virus, supplies **like hand sanitizers, face masks, tissue papers, hand gloves** are in high demand. Before the outbreak of the virus, it was not common to see people with face masks and hand gloves on the street while constantly using hand sanitizers. But when it was known that these supplies prevents or reduces the outbreak of the virus, consumers are influenced and rush to get these even at their hiked prices. Normally, for instance, if a hand sanitizer is sold for 500 naira on a normal day and is then increased to 2000 naira during the pandemic, consumers won’t think twice before they buy. This is because they have established the use and feel obligated to buy it. If there was no virus and the prices are hiked either ways, no one would buy it.

Cleaning materials are also not left out in the process of **panic buying**. Cleaning often touched surface may kill the virus before it gets chance to manifest also reduces the risk of people contacting the virus. Cleaning materials too are therefore in very high demand.

**PURCHASE OF ENTERTAINMENT AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS BY CONSUMERS**

Since the coronavirus pandemic has become widespread with over one million cases over the world and rising. The government has issued a lock down in states and countries. Lockdown is a given period of time where people are expected to remain in their various houses until the total number reduces, a cure is found, or the virus passes. While fathers, mothers and children remain at home, there are many things that they would need in order to cope with the lock down. Most schools have resulted to **online** **classes** and these online classes enables them to study and read even while they are at home. Children who are not in possession of mobile phones, laptop and internet would have to get one. They have to purchase a laptop along with internet in order to continue with their classes. In normal circumstances, they would not need a mobile phone or internet if they are going to their various schools. But because of the virus, their buying behavior has been influenced.

Parents who also need to work from home need to get materials that they would use. Many may be outfitting their spaces with items that let them work comfortably and efficiently. News reporters would have to film from their houses and so need to get proper lightning and cameras same with content or video creators. In the US, sales of home improvement, gardening, and interior design products which includes things like office furniture, lamps, and area rugs were up to 13 percent in early march. They may need to get certain things that would still ensure that they get their work done and in high quality.

Also, many Chinese stuck at home have turned to online entertainment, such as video games. Apple has seen an increase in downloads, with 222 million games downloads. YouTube has also recorded a high number of watch time in less than a month. Tic tok, a rising asocial media platform has gotten more subscribers and creators all over the world. If people are occupied with other work, they would not spend much time on the internet.

**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 six weeks and is only starting to reemerge on the other side. Some artists who were meant to travel for concerts have been unable to do so.

Heightened delays in Singapore are likely because of very early restrictions that were **implemented there, such as strict border controls, aggressive testing measures, intensive tracing of carriers, and surveillance actions**.

The country has managed to contain the virus so far but, understandably, consumers are still about booking new travel.

Among travel enthusiasts (those who express an interest in travel), around half say they are delaying purchasing a vacation and close to 1 in 3 are delaying purchasing a flight. On the other hand, only 9% of Japanese internet users say they are delaying purchasing flights and just 14% say they are also delaying booking a vacation.

People who have intended in travelling to attend concerts or vacations in some places like Italy have not been allowed to do so because of the corona virus pandemic. It has affected their buying behavior and **already planned concerts, program, shows, parties, within and outside the world is suffering for it.**

The above are not only what suffers the brutal corona virus. **The hajj pilgrim, the Olympic Games and countries whole only source of income, e.g. Dubai** also suffer. If people do not get their tickets for what they have planned. They will suffer huge losses

**HIGHER DEMAND THAN SUPPLY**

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 behavior. Pasta, toilet rolls, hand sanitizers and other long life food are just some of the product that have been loading up in recent weeks. 45% of consumers globally say they have purchased extra food and drink supplies.

While 43% say they have purchased extra household supplies such as toilet rolls, tissues and cleaning supplies.

According to **Helen Dickinson**, head of the British retail consortium, ‘there 1 billion pounds more foods in peoples house than three weeks ago’. Retailers 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 are struggling to get items into store as fast as consumers are purchasing them. This has left many supermarkets in UK such as **Tesco and Waitrose**, with no option but to limit the amounts of item a person can purchase.

**LUXURY IS TAKING A BACKSEAT**

The luxury market is also taking a hit, with 15% of consumers delaying purchases of luxury items. This rises to 22% in the Philippines and 20% in china.

And among an audience of affluent, luxury buyers in china, around 2 in 5 say they are delaying purchases of luxury items.

For brands operating in china, this presents a serious blow as this country currently dominates the luxury purchases market and in fact, is expected to account for 41% share of the global luxury market by 2025. On singles day last year, Alibaba saw revenues of 38.4 billion dollars.

In addition, our global research found that 65% of Chinese consumers say they try to buy the premium version of a product, compared to 55% of global internet users. This underlines the challenges facing brands in the luxury sector who rely heavily on Chinese consumers.

Age is also a strong influencer for delaying purchases. We found that gen z are most likely to be delaying purchases in several categories, no doubt in part to their lower average income levels.

Notably, over 20% of gen z say that they are delaying buying technology devices such as smart phones. This is important because Gen zs are the biggest users of mobiles, spending an average of 4 hours and 9 minutes globally per day on their smart phone.

**PURCHASES COULD BE DELAYED FOR QUITE SOME TIME**

It is clear that purchasing habits could take a long time to return to normal. Over 40% of consumers say they will buy major purchases only when the outbreak decreases or ends in their countries. But close to 20% say they will wait until the outbreak decreases or is over globally.

Chinese consumers are most likely to say they will resume purchasing when the outbreak decreases or ends on a national level.

All categories risk being affected significantly until the crisis is over. Looking at our breakdown, around half of consumers who are delaying purchases of flights and technology devices say they will buy these only when the outbreak is over.

In conclusion, corona virus, COVID 19 is a terrible virus that has cost the lives of plenty, while some are still in their sick beds. The virus has also affected the buying behavior of consumers as we have examine above. It makes them change their buying pattern based on the situation at hand regardless of how much it may cost to ensure that their works get done and together, they can all beat the virus.

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