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INTRODUCTION.

Consumer behaviour generally refers to the study of consumer related activities in the selection, buying, use and disposal of goods and services. There are several factors that can affect consumer behaviour which can either encourage consumers to purchase more items or discourage them from purchasing items. In light of this, The Covid-19 virus is a world-wide pandemic that is ravaging the world at large. It has no cure or no vaccine and it has killed multiple thousands of people. However, in the midst of all this, the WHO has prescribed some guidelines to be followed by everyone to help slow the spread of the virus as well as avoid contracting it. My objective for writing this report is to examine the effects that the covid-19 virus has had on consumer behaviour world-wide. While doing this, I intend to talk about normal consumer behaviour few months before the virus, current consumer behaviour with the outbreak of the virus and, I would also attempt a prediction of consumer behaviour post covid-19.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR BEFORE COVID-19

Simply put, consumer behaviour is the study of consumer activities and the manner in which they select, purchase, use and dispose of goods. Ordinarily, consumers tend to satisfy their basic needs first which are food, water, shelter and clothing as these are necessities of life. So, consumers essentially satisfy theses four needs in order to stay alive, After these have four basic needs have been satisfied, then consumers start to satisfy the more complex needs. According to Abraham Maslow, the motivating forces for wants operates sequentially in the sense that once one level of needs have been satisfied, needs of the next level come up and then they are satisfied. This goes on to buttress the fact that the needs of man are insatiable and also that, the satisfaction of one need leads to the emergence of another need. Abraham Maslow depicted this in the form of a pyramid. At the base of the pyramid are the basic needs such as food water and shelter. After these we begin to yearn for safety and protection. Followed by this is the want for love and acceptance by other people. After being accepted by a family, the need for status, self-actualisation, respect and importance begin to creep in. This is how we keep going.

RECENT TRENDS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN 2019 AND 2020

Known to all of us is the fact that we are in the digital age. The implication of this is that the use of technology is being integrated into our lives more and more from the simple to complex functions. That being said, the emphasis of most people nowadays is on technology. Technology serves the purpose of making life easier and performing tasks with more efficiency. This has been a trend for the past few years.

Another notable trend is the new definition of beauty. Traditionally, beauty meant looking a particular way and being of a particular body size however, this has started to change. The concept now has more inclusivity to it. With accommodation for people with deformities and uncommon physical attributes. Also, plus sized people are being included more and more. This goes on to show the adaptive nature of man in moving from the traditional perception of a concept to a more modern and inclusive take on it. Generally beauty is now considered as a way of expressing one’s self regardless of how one looks.

The demand for eco-friendly options is also now a common trend. Known to a lot of people is the fact that the planet now faces a major problem in pollution. Land masses and oceans are currently being filled with wastes of all sorts. This is endangering our planet as pollution poses many threats such as depletion of the ozone layer, contamination of soils for planting, contamination of oceans and depletion of aquatic life amongst others. Knowledge of this has prompted people opt for eco-friendly options.

In light of all of this, people must fulfil their basic needs first before they go ahead to fulfil the more complex needs and follow global trends. In essence, these trends listed above entail secondary needs.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND COVID-19

The recent outbreak of the covid-19 virus has caused a lot of panic and fear as the virus is a deadly one. The fact that the virus spreads really fast and kills many people has caused governments all around the world to come up with various strategies to try and prevent the virus from spreading any further. Some of these strategies include call for social distancing, suspension of major sporting events, suspension of commercial flights, closing of schools amongst others. All these have been put in place in order to ensure the safety of the general public. Scientists and researchers have been working tirelessly to try and find a cure for the dreaded disease. While they are doing this, the rest of the world is basically on hold. Because virtually all occupations have been put on hold except the ‘essential’ workers. Amidst all these strategies by governments to slow the spread of the virus, movement all over the world has reduced considerably meaning an automatic decrease in the demand for fuel. Also, the fact that the duration of this virus is unknown, and movement has been restricted most people want to get necessary items that would last them throughout the lock down period. In other words, people are engaging in what is called ‘panic buying’. The world health organisation has made some statements about precautions to take which include: washing hand regularly with soap or with alcohol based rub, avoid touching the face especially the eyes, nose and mouth, covering ones face with elbow or disposable tissue when sneezing or coughing, wearing masks covering ones face when coming in contact with other people. In following all these precautions, demand for some particular products like face masks, hand soap, hand sanitizers, tissue paper, disposable gloves amongst others will be high. 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.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TRENDS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

The priorities of most people in terms of items to buy in preparation for the covid-19 pandemic have proven to have an effect on the buying patterns on consumers around the world. With the next few paragraphs, I intend to examine buying trends of consumers in response to the outbreak of this pandemic.

As of recent, a lot of people have been paying a lot of attention to their personal hygiene. Also, the fact that the WHO has released statements saying that people should wash their hands more frequently has lead to an increase in the demand for hand sanitizers, and hand soap. People are more conscious than ever about what they touch and the people that they come in contact with. One of the easiest ways to stop the covid-19 virus from spreading to you is by washing hands regularly and this has pushed people to buy more hand sanitizers and hand soap.

Another trend in consumer behaviour that has started since the outbreak of the pandemic is the rise in demand for household items such as food, and cleaning materials. There is currently a lot of uncertainty regarding the situation that the world is currently in. Most people do not know when the situation is going to subside. It could go on for several more weeks or even months. Nobody knows and as a result of this, people are preparing themselves by getting all the necessary supplies to last them for the next few weeks.

With the outbreak of this pandemic, a lot of people have been staying at home especially in affected countries and, it’s going to remain like this until we can get the covid-19 situation under control which is going to take some time. That being said a lot of people know that they are going to be stuck at home for quite some time and in light of this, people have been searching for ways to keep themselves company while all this happens. The demand for some particular electronic devices like video games and their accessories as well video players have increased. This is simply because people want to keep themselves company while staying at home.

Also, the sales of basic medical supplies have increased with the outbreak of this pandemic because, people want to take good care of themselves while they stay at home and in order to do this they need basic medical supplies.

The fact that offices are closed and most employees are being encouraged to work from home, many may be outfitting their spaces with items that let them work comfortably and efficiently. This is only reasonable because people still want to feel and have a sense of purpose while staying at home and one of the ways to do this is by working from home. So, preparing a suitable environment to do this is necessary.

Evidently the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus has altered the consumer behaviour in a lot of countries. Buying patterns have changed and, the emphasis of a lot of people has now shifted from mostly just electronics and technology integration to a now wider range of products including things like food and household appliances because nobody knows how long the pandemic is going to last for and nobody knows how much longer some of these appliances are going to be available for so, the basic instinct of most people is to get as much of it as possible now that it is still available.

CONSUMER BEHAVIUOR POST COVID-19

Having discussed consumer behaviour and trends before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, I now want to discuss the predicted changes in consumer behaviour after the virus is gone. A lot of specialists and researchers believe that this virus is going to leave a long lasting impression on most people and, this would lead to a change in consumer behaviour. It has been predicted that even after the situation gets under control, people are still going to pay more attention than ever to personal hygiene and proper sanitation. It has also been predicted that people are going to be weary of public transportation as well as crowded places at least for the first few months after the virus is eradicated. That being said, all these are just predictions as there is always a possibility that they might not materialise however, these researchers have given us some very good reasons to trust their predictions because the whole world now knows that contagious diseases spread faster through large gatherings and, no one knows if there would ever be another virus like this. That is always going to be a possibility and people are conscious of this so.

PREDICTED TRENDS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR POST COVID-19

It has been predicted that a lot of people are going to be reluctant to use public transport systems and as a result of this, there could be an increase in the sales of cars. Of course everyone can’t afford to buy their own cars. This prediction lays emphasis on middle class individuals who have simply chosen to use public transport rather than buy their own cars.

It has also been predicted that online shopping in a lot of countries around the Americas and Europe are going to see an increase. This prediction covers both basic and complex items from industrial machinery to grocery shopping. This is one of the predicted trends.

Another one of the predictions is that people are still going to take personal hygiene very seriously and as a result of this, products like hand sanitizers as well as soaps and disposable tissue would be in demand. Although people might not engage in ‘panic buying’ and just buy ridiculously large amounts of these products, consumers would buy more of these products than they did before the outbreak of the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The covid-19 virus has ravaged so many countries and, it is currently still wreaking havoc all over the world. The virus has affected so many activities from basic things like riding a bike on the street to attending business summits. I wanted to give an insight on the implication that the pandemic has on consumer buying behaviour. I hope I have been able to do a proper analysis on the patterns of consumer behaviour immediately before the outbreak of the pandemic, consumer behaviour during the outbreak of the pandemic, and the predictions of consumer behaviour which could take place even after the virus has subsided.

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