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**A PAPER ON: *How the pandemic (COVID-19) has affected consumer buying behavior.***

**ABSTRACT**

A famous writer once said: *a life worth living is a life worthy of consumption*. Every living being in this world has adapted to this statement in one way or the other. In other words, to stay alive and sustain oneself, one has to do a lot of consuming as a life activity. Every human being in the world is a consumer. However, everyone has some factors which are peculiar to them and these factors appeal to their buying behavior; they play a role in helping them decide the behavior or the pattern they are to undertake when buying.

In some cases, some environmental factors play a role in affecting our buying behavior and the present situation of the world could be classified as one of those environmental factors that are affecting consumer buying behavior. The outbreak of the Corona Virus Disease has set a compass that has changed our buying behavior as opposed to our behavior before the outbreak.

In the light of the above, this paper seeks to explain how the Corona Virus Pandemic has affected consumer buying behavior. The paper will successfully achieve its aim by introducing the reader of this work to what a pandemic is; it shall go further by giving a brief introduction about the Corona Virus disease. Moving on, the paper shall explain how the Corona Virus Disease has affected the consumer buying behavioral patter and afterwards, the paper shall draw to a conclusions and make recommendations.

**HOW THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR**

In a globe housed by millions of people, certain problems and hazards are bound to occur and they tend to have a lot of underlying effects on human existence and lifestyle. Lives are lost, the economy may be affected and even new policies may arise. The outbreak of a Pandemic is one of the problems in question.

According to Collins Dictionary (7th Edition), a pandemic is an epidemic that is geographically widespread; occurring throughout a region or even throughout the world. The general opinion of a pandemic is that it is a disease that is prevalent over a whole country or over the world. Since the existence of mankind, the world has suffered and is still suffering a lot of pandemics; some of which includes Plagues, Flu, Polio, Malaria and many others. Presently, the most pressing pandemic in the world that requires attention is the very dangerous Corona Virus Disease (COVID 19). The outbreak of this virus started in China and today, it has spread across different countries of the world.

Presently, the country suffering from the widest spread of this disease is the United States of America. This disease has caused the implementation of a lockdown in almost all parts of the world thereby leading to a gradual decline in the world economy.

Apart from the fact that the Corona Virus Disease has affected the world population by taking the lives of over a million people in the world, there is another integral part of human life which it has affected and that is the consumer buying behavior. Two scholars of Afe Babalola University, Dr. Achugo Eusebius and Folayan Opeoluwa(MSc), authored a book titled ‘***Consumer Behavior, a Business Science Approach’*** and in that book, they defined consumer behavior as ‘the study of how consumers select, purchase, use and dispose a product, goods and services so as to satisfy personal or industrial needs.

There are many factors that affect a consumer’s buying behavior. The factors could be desire for the product, social influences like culture, family, psychological factors and perception. In other words, the list of factors are not exhaustive. Due to the present outbreak of Corona Virus Disease, the consumer buying behavior has been affected and this paper seeks to explicate on how this has happened. Usually, people have been buying commodities that suit their normal lifestyle and their other needs and wants but due this pandemic, there are some behavioral changes pertaining to consumption that has changed.

The first consumer behavioral change that has occurred is **proactive health-minded buying.** In recent times, people were accustomed to buying commodities like foods without averting their minds to buying commodities that boost and enhance our healthy. Due to the fact that the pandemic we are presently suffering is more dangerous to those with weak immune systems, people have changed their consumption pattern by buying more healthy foods to keep their immune system strong. Also, due to the fact that the hospitals are overcrowded with Corona Virus patients, people are only buying commodities that are healthy in order to prevent falling sick and having to go to the hospital. This is why the consumption of fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods have drastically increased over time. Even the quantity of water consumed by households have increased due to the fact that increased intake of water is advisable in such a time of our lives where a disease is fast spreading. People are more conscious in the buying.

Another thing that has been evident in the consumer buying behavior of people since the outbreak of this Corona Virus Pandemic is **bulk buying for pantry storage.** Since the outbreak of this disease, the major directive that has been prescribed for people is to ensure physical distancing and to stay at home. For this reason, people started buying all manner of food stuff in bulk so as to store in their homes and sustain themselves during the period of this outbreak. Another reason for this is that due to the crowded nature of markets and food stores, people who were trying to prevent having contact with other people, started to buy food in bulk and store in their houses. This buying behavior was also influenced by the Federal Government’s decision to implement a lockdown. It is has become evident that people who do not normally food materials in bulk now started to buy in bulk.

Since the outbreak of the Corona Virus Pandemic, there has become a **high demand for infection containment products.** As the saying goes, ‘desperate times call for desperate measures’. Indeed, people are now in desperate need of sanitizers, hang gloves and masks because they contain spread of infections. Prior to the outbreak of this infectious disease, people did not have any need for infection containment products like sanitizers, hand gloves, and face masks and therefore, the demand for those commodities were very low and the prices were also relatively low. The reverse is the case now. This is because to prevent spread of the disease, people need to start regularly sanitizing their hands, wearing gloves and also wearing face masks as they carry out their daily activities. We now notice that in different stores and markets, these products have increased in price and are also very scarce because people are not only buying for themselves, but are also buying for their family members. Even the production sector is overburdened as the production rate for these products have increased.

As people have started imbibing the habit of staying indoors, they have also started buying more energy resources like petrol, diesel and kerosene. This is so because these products are required to compliment the times we are staying at home. People are now buying more petrol and diesel so they can power their generators in order to preserve the foods they have bought through freezing and also to watch news and gain more health awareness. They are also buying more kerosene in order to light up their lamps at night (for those who do not have generators) and also to enable them cook using their kerosene stoves. In a nutshell, people are now buying more commodities that will help compliment their at home; that is, those things that will make our stay at home better and more worthwhile. If there was no outbreak of this disease, people will not need to buy as much as they are buying at this moment of their lives.

Leaving our homes and going to eateries and joints is sometimes a suitable practice but today, the reverse is the case. Due to the fact that people are isolating themselves from others, the desire to go out and buy junk foods and other foods from outside is gradually declining. People no longer feel safe buying meals from eateries and joints because they are scared that the foods will be contaminated with infections. Another reason why the demand for foods from eateries is gradually reducing is because people are staying indoors and do not want to go out. For this reason, the eateries are no longer opening until the virus has been curbed. We now notice the decline in demand for junk foods like burger, pizza, grilled foods, ice cream and others. Even young children who value these foods can no longer get them because their parents will not allow it.

Online shopping is also a behavioral pattern of consumers that has been affected drastically since the outbreak of Corona Virus disease. Due to the closure of boarders and the lockdown, delivery of goods ordered online cannot be made possible anymore and this is why the habit of buying things online by customers have reduced drastically and the online stores are no longer operating as they used to operate before. The only things people are now buying online are foods and other groceries and that can only be possible in developed countries of the world.

Another area that has been ignored by consumers during this pandemic is the beauty sector. The beauty sector in question are the hair salon, beauty shops and spa. These areas have been ignored because of the fact that people are staying indoors and for that reason, there is no need for beauty enhancement. Also, by following the directives of the government in their advise to stay indoors and isolate each other, people can no longer come in contract with hairdressers, barbers and others.

Based on the different submissions that have been given above, it is very clear that since the outbreak of the pandemic, people have increased their demand for some commodities and on the other hand, the demand for some other commodities have drastically reduced. This is in line with the principles of consumer behavior as a discipline because the environment is a major factor that influences our buying behavior as consumers. People consume goods in order to sustain themselves and to suit every situation they find themselves.