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**COURSE TITLE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR (BUS 208)**

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

**INTRODUCTION**

In other to stay alive and maintain sustenance as human beings, the need to consume is very vital. It is for this reason that the study of consumer behavior is important. In all walks of life something is always consumed; in the home, food items and other utensils are consumed; in the office, office appliances are consumed; in factories, raw materials are consumed. Every living being is consumer. However, the things we consume are usually influenced by many factors that surround us. These factors are not exhaustive.

These factors that affect our buying behavior could either be internal or external. The internal factors are the factors that are within the control of the consumer. In other words, they are those factors that are peculiar to the consumer. For instance, a hypertensive patient will reduce his consumption of salt. On the other hand, the external factors are those factors other than the peculiarities of the consumer such as the environment, culture, social association, social class. Today, an external factor which is associated with the environment has affected consumer behavior and that is the outbreak of the Corona Virus Pandemic. Due to this pandemic, the consumer buying behavior has shifted from what it used to be to an entirely different thing.

Due to the fact that there is human existence in this world we find ourselves, the outbreak of such a pandemic is unavoidable and it leaves us with no choice but to try to curb it or prevent its fast spread or else a lot of things about our society will change for the worst. Moving forward, the meaning of a pandemic will be explained.

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. As far back as the beginning of human existence, the world or some parts of the world has suffered some pandemics such as plagues, Flu, Polio, HIV, Ebola, Malaria and many others. Today, the most prevalent pandemic which has caused a lockdown in almost all parts of the world thereby leading to a decline in the world economy is the Corona Virus Pandemic which began in an Asian country, China and has spread through almost every continent of the world. Since its outbreak, the world has recorded over a million deaths with over half of those deaths coming from the United States of America and then the other highly affected countries are Spain, Italy, and United Kingdom.

Since the outbreak of the Corona Virus Pandemic, there is an essential part of human daily lives that has been affected and that is the consumer buying behavior. The demand curve showing the demand for some commodities has increased while the demand curve for some other commodities has flattened. Consumer behavior is the study of how consumers select, purchase, use and dispose a product, goods and services so as to satisfy personal or industrial needs. It is also a body of knowledge or discipline and the study of the decision making process and all the acts of both the final users in the purchase and consumption of goods and services.

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 lists of these 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.

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

1. **Healthy minded buying:** ever since the outbreak of the corona virus disease, people have started to become more health minded especially with the foods they buy. According to the advice from health awareness programs, people with weak immune systems and underlying health problems die faster when they contract Corona Virus than others who have strong immune systems. For this reason, people were advised to start eating healthy and that is why people have started buying more healthy food as opposed to the unhealthy ones. They are now buying foods that will have all the nutrients the body needs to stay strong. The consumption rate of fruits, vegetables and even water has risen from what it used to be. Another reason why they are doing this is because to prevent falling sick at such a time like this.
2. **Bulk buying at grocery stores and food markets:** due to the fact that the virus in question is infectious and communicable, people have been advised to stay in their homes to prevent the fast spread of the virus. In order to stay at home for an uncertain period, people were left with no choice but to stock up their homes with enough food. By doing so, they started increasing the quantity of food they bought as opposed to the regular quantity they used to buy. For instance, people that were buying one tuber of yam bought 10 tubers; people bought more provisions in bulk; bags of rice were purchased and so on. This led to a scarcity of food stuff in our markets; even the shelves of provision stores were empty due to high demand. In this period where we are suffering from a pandemic, people are taking priority in buying excess foods to last them throughout the period of the lockdown.
3. **Buying of infection containment goods:** before the outbreak of the corona virus disease, people had little or no interest in buying infection containment goods like face masks and hand gloves. But due to the situation we have found ourselves, the need to buy these goods have arisen. The corona virus disease is a disease that can spread very fast because it can stay on surfaces and the cough droplets that stay in the atmosphere from people coughing can cause the disease. In order for people to stay safe, they have started buying hand gloves and face masks for themselves and their family members. Even the government has ordered for mass production of these items so that they can be distributed to a good number of citizens who cannot gain access to them. Apart from buying hand gloves and face masks, people have also increased their demand for anti bacterial soaps in order to enable them wash their hands regularly. In other words, people have now become encouraged to buy more of the infection containment goods which they will not buy on a normal day.
4. **Lower demand for junk foods and other out-of-home meals:** the fear in people have increased since the outbreak of this pandemic. One of those fears is the fear to eat foods that are made outside of their home by fast food and restaurant staff. Due to the fact that the corona virus symptoms are not always visible in the carriers, people are very scared of allowing themselves eat food made by people who they do not know. Due to this uncertainty, they are no longer interested in buying foods (including junk foods) from fast foods and restaurants. In addition, due to the lockdown, social distancing and self isolation, people can no longer come out of their homes to get such out-of-home made meals. They prefer to stick to the foods which they are making in their houses.
5. **Decline in the use of E-commerce:** prior to the outbreak of the corona virus disease, a lot of people who were technologically inclined were making good use of the internet to buy the things they wanted. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the virus has led to a decline in that practice. The decline in the use of E-commerce is as a result of closure of boarders and so goods ordered online can no longer be delivered to their various destinations. In other words, all habits of buying things from online shops are gradually coming to a halt due to this disease.

By way of conclusion, it is clear that what we have been taught in our different consumer behavior lectures are now coming to play as we are now able to see how people’s consumer buying behavior can change as a result of the environmental factors that surround them. This is now a practical aspect of what we were taught in class as we can see how people’s buying behavior have changed from what it used to be. In addition, it is now safe to say that the outbreak of a pandemic like corona virus disease is a factor that can affect consumer buying behavior.