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COURSE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR.

EFFECT OF THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC ON CUNSUMER BEHAVIOUR

 Consumer behavior can simply be defined as the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer’s emotional, mental and behavioral responses that precede or follow these activities.

The sudden occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic has no doubt impacted on the normal consumer behavioral patterns, as affected countries have implored citizens to stock up on food and other items because of the curfew, and also keeping social distance from one another in order to avoid further spread of the virus. The lockdown for certain countries which is set to extend through the month of April, and others extending through into the month of May, consumers have begun to settle into the temporary norms which includes regular trips or online orders to replenish necessities and little less, although most non essential business have closed their doors, consumers are still holding to normal behaviors such as, eating out through restaurant traffic , while majority of consumers are still making out occasional take out or delivery orders to supplement their in home eating behavior.

In order to encourage social distancing Neilson carried out a consumer behavioral search that started in china where the virus was rooted at before extending to other parts of the country, as the consumer trends were monitored, where the popular virus reached the public. It was found that consumers go through six behavioral stages based on their awareness of the virus spread in their communities. These six stages include;

1. **Reactive health management**; this prioritized of products for infection containments.
2. **Panty preparation**: the higher the purchase of shelf safe products and increased stores visits.
3. **Living anew normal:** increased health awareness even as people return to their typical daily activities.
4. **Quarantine living preparations**: the quarantine which has resulted to curfew, online shopping orders have increased which has prevented citizens from going out more.
5. **Living new normal**: this has made people care much more about their health.
6. **Proactive health minding buying:** the interest in acquisition of buying health minding products that will maintain well being or health is increased.

The consequences of this virus happen to affect consumer buying greatly which can be positive, negative, economical change or affect the ways of the manufacturer, retailer, wholesaler, etc. There have been both positive and negative ways the consumer behavioral patterns have been affected by this virus.

The positive ways include;

* Rate of interest in online selling and buying has increased;

As a result of this deadly virus people tend to see the need to buy and sell online in order to avoid getting or coming in contact with an already infected person. Alibaba reported that in china online grocery orders placed by people in the 1960’s have increased rapidly due to the virus.

* Digital streaming;

Due to the deadly virus people tend to focus on protecting themselves , this pandemic resulting to lockdowns all over the country, and prevent people from going about with their day to day activities giving them no choice but to run to the digital service streaming lik, Netflix, amazon, diseny etc.

* Interest in entertainment and media;

The interests of individuals in entertainment and media platforms have rapidly increased as a result of this pandemic. Individuals have turned back to their various media platforms such as, Whatsapp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat etc.

Effect on manufacturers;

In the cause of this virus most countries move from restrictions to restricted movements. These restricted movements has challenged many suppliers to turn directly to the consumers, these manufacturers thereby start thinking of a way to directly sell to consumers thereby disrupting the normal chain of distribution. These manufacturers have seen a way to make more sales due to this virus.

Manufacturers have positively gained and also impacted in this period of the virus whereby the normal food chain of distribution is affected because the consumers are focused on their movement restriction thereby must be active and maintain their ecommerce growth when the lockdown is over.

In the economic point of view;

* Sales of facemask and housekeeping facilities;

 The facemasks which are intended to help prevent the spread of the deadly virus. In Italy the reparation to take good care of individuals in their houses before the lockdown was enforced in the country. The sales of medical equipment sparked by 286 percent, in nearly march France had already started their full enforcement lockdown and by March the sales for PPE and food supplies had increased by 600 percent.

* Low demand for luxurious goods.

As a result of this virus some products and services increase, and in order cases restaurant bars, airplanes and other luxurious business risk great loss due to this virus. Vogue business projects gain a great loss of $10 billion for the industry in 2020, and aero contractors who have declared there be a loss of over 252 billion naira. This is because luxery goods rely on the asian market purchasing power where the pandemic has been affecting customers since January.

* Fashion and apparel;

Fashion and apparel have gone low in sight and need o customers, sellers are experiencing greater loss they are closing down the retail arms of their business people are thereby not interested in buying clothes from one individual department.

* Change in sale of groceries;

As a result of the lockdown the rate at which consumers buy goods have changed, inorder to avoid crowd which is also a known way of further spreading of the virus. Individuals are therefore encouraged to keep purchasing online, go to the store for pick up, queue up before entering into a particular place.

Impact on marketing;

The virus affects the marketing sphere the most as buyers and sellers cant go out to buy and sell products cause of the lockdown, this will thereby make buyers and sellers to adapt to the situation and find other means of marketing thereby using the social media and internet to continue business as though marketing continues demands have fallen drastically cause it s not everyone that uses the internet or is on social media to continue marketing especially on the sides of the sellers( illiterate wise). As we are faced with this challenging period advertising will become strict so as to ensure positive light is being promoted.

Effects on retailers;

* Managing demand fluctuations; in red zone markets where the virus is spreading virtually every retail outlet except grocery stores and pharmacies have shut their doors. Even these markets not under quarantine orders have seen a precarious drop off in physical football retail outlets and malls. Yet while some retailers are seeing demand fall away and customers shift channels, others are facing unprecedented spikes in demand
* Protecting the people;

The deadly virus has already led to a number of workplaces shutdown and quarantined. Retailers must have a plan that ensures the safety of its workers while also trying to maintain business as usual activities. Beyond simply creating a crises communication plan, retailers should be thinking about how they’ll manage their workforce under various different scenarios.

* Long term challenges;

While grocery retailers are trying to manage significant supply challenges due to consumer panic buying and resulting stock outs, most non- food retailers are not yet feeling the full impact of supply disruptions, drops of demand coupled with long lead teams and inventory warehousing meaning short-term supply is generally not the problem. But as the situation evolves, we expect to see significant variations in the magnitude and timing of supply chain disruptions across geographies and subsectors. To assess their risks, identify any indirect exposure and create contingency.