**NAME: IKECHUKWU OBINNA STEPHEN.K.**

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In not less than 2000 words, explain explicitly how the Pandemic (COVID 19) has affected consumer buying behaviour.

**Abstract**

This work is assigned to me for the purpose of critically explaining and discussing how the current pandemic known as corona virus(COVID-19) has affected and influenced consumer buying behaviour. Before heading into the body of this topic I will give an introduction what the pandemic entails and what consumer behaviour is all about. All these is to be carried out in not less than 2000 words.

**Introduction**

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 with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. 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](https://www.businessinsider.com/more-people-under-lockdown-than-alive-during-world-war-ii-2020-3?r=US&IR=T) 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. This will be analysed in the subsequent paragraphs below.

**Body**

Consumer behaviour is the study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, use (consume), and dispose of products and services, including consumers’ emotional, mental, and behavioural responses. Consumer behaviour incorporates ideas from several sciences including psychology, biology, chemistry, and economics. Why is consumer behaviour important? Studying consumer behaviour is important because this way marketers can understand what influences consumers’ buying decisions. By understanding how consumers decide on a product they can fill in the gap in the market and identify the products that are needed and the products that are obsolete. Studying consumer behaviour also helps marketers decide how to present their products in a way that generates maximum impact on consumers. Understanding consumer buying behaviour is the key secret to reaching and engaging your clients, and convert them to purchase from you.

A consumer behaviour analysis should reveal:

What consumers think and how they feel about various alternatives (brands, products, etc.) What influences consumers to choose between various options; Consumers’ behaviour while researching and shopping; How consumers’ environment (friends, family, media, etc.) influences their behaviour.

Consumer behaviour is often influenced by different factors. Marketers should study consumer purchase patterns and figure out buyer trends. In most cases, brands influence consumer behaviour only with the things they can control; like how IKEA seems to compel you to spend more than what you intended to every time you walk into the store.

So what are the factors that influence consumers to say yes? There are three categories of factors that influence consumer behaviour:

i] Personal factors: an individual’s interests and opinions that can be influenced by demographics (age, gender, culture, etc.). ii]Psychological factors: an individual’s response to a marketing message will depend on their perceptions and attitudes. iii] Social factors: family, friends, education level, social media, income, they all influence consumers’ behaviour.

I will explain one after the other how Corona virus has affected consumer buying behaviours in other to arrange my points

1] **delay in international purchasing on goods and products**: More expensive purchases like buying goods in bulk for business purposes and those that involve global transportation, are the most likely to be delayed while the outbreak is still ongoing. For example, igbo people who buy goods from china cannot afford to purchase those goods as it could risk the spread of the virus and countries have already restricted their themselves from exportation and importation. This will affect the lives of people who depend on these goods as their source of income and prices of those goods that are already in the country will sky rocket(increase) due to limitation. For example, if we are unable to import rice, there will be a limited number of rice in the market and this will contribute to the increase in price.

2] **unable to buy traveling tickets for personal or business use**: For example, 41% of global consumers have delayed purchasing vacations and holidays. Singapore implemented [early restrictions](https://www.ft.com/content/ca4e0db0-6aaa-11ea-800d-da70cff6e4d3), 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 cautious about booking new travel. Some countries have completely restricted people from coming into their countries by closing their borders. No one can get in or out of these countries. This has affected consumer buying behaviour in the sense that they are not allowed to purchase tickets to go to those countries they wish to go. Choices for vacation and business meeting have been limited.

3] **buying of products within countries and cities could also be delayed**: it is clear that buying of essentials or products down the street or around the block will be affected due to the temporary lockdown that has been put in place by the government. Some countries flog and penalize people or citizens who go out in the streets. This has contributed to the delay in buying groceries and necessities. For example, if Mrs Funke’s normal behaviour or duty is to buy food stuffs every Fridays and Saturdays, this will be negatively influenced as she is not allowed to go out because of lock down

4] **80% in 100% consumers have changed their buying and everyday behaviours because of the virus**:research shows widespread concern has quickly translated into direct action. Over 80% of those that have been surveyed have made at least one change to their day-to-day lives as a direct result of the coronavirus outbreak.Understandably, the most popular response is to wash hands more frequently (6 in 10), but that’s not the only change we’re seeing. 40% in 100% are reading the news more frequently.

30% in 100% are trying to avoid touching public surfaces such as door knobs / elevator buttons.

20% in 100% are altering their daily routines to avoid rush hour and crowded places. Men are more likely to be making work-related changes around upcoming trips or commuting patterns, while the U.S. has a significant lead over the UK in terms of checking social media more frequently. This will negatively affect their buying schedule

5] **Consumers are struggling to buy essentials**: people actually fight each other these days just to get hold of essentials and necessities like toiletries. 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 behaviours. Pasta, toilet rolls, hand sanitizer, and other long-life foods are just some of the products that consumers have been loading up on in recent weeks.

45% of consumers globally say they’ve 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’s [£1bn](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51737030) more food in people’s houses than there was 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](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51737030) food supplies, but they’re struggling to get items into stores as fast as consumers are purchasing them. This has left many supermarkets in the UK, such as Tesco and Waitrose, with no option but to [limit](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-supermarkets-coronavirus-stockpiling-rationing-tesco-waitrose-toilet-roll-hand-sanitiser-a9385391.html) the amount of items a person can purchase. And the UK government is urging consumers to [shop responsibly](https://metro.co.uk/2020/03/15/supermarkets-beg-shoppers-stop-coronavirus-panic-buying-12400000/) and to be considerate of others. Many UK retailers have also implemented dedicated shopping hours for elderly, vulnerable groups, and NHS medical staff to allow them to get the items they need. data shows that Australians are struggling the most to buy fundamental household and food items. Two-thirds of Australian consumers say they’re struggling to buy essential household items like toilet rolls, compared to just 8% in China and 7% in Italy. Also, just over a third of Australians are also having a difficult time purchasing food and drink items (globally just 11% say the same). This is partly because of supply issues from countries Australia relies on for trade, such as China. There also seems to be an information gap in South Africa. For example, 29% of South Africans have the biggest issue with getting up-to-date information about the situation in their local area and 22% struggle to get up-to-date information about the situation in their country. This highlights just how important accurate, timely, and trustworthy news is at this time.

6] **PPE and medical supplies are in high demand**: Face masks (45%) and hand sanitizer gel (30%) are the top items globally that consumers are struggling to purchase.  By country, Japan sees the highest struggle to buy face masks at 78%, while the Philippines struggles the most to purchase hand sanitizer gel at 70%. This is a common occurrence across most countries. Google searches for hand sanitizer have [skyrocketed](https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=hand%20sanitizer&geo=US), while many pharmacies and stores have sold out. With the increased demand, Amazon and Walmart sellers have also been criticized for [price gouging](https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/25/821513190/stop-price-gouging-33-attorneys-general-tell-amazon-walmart-others). But some brands have been lending a hand. Louis Vuitton owner, LVMH, [started](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51868756) making hand sanitizer to meet demand and SpaceX is also [manufacturing](https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/25/21194400/spacex-coronavirus-hand-sanitizer-face-shields-donation-hospital) its own hand sanitizer and face shields with plans to donate materials to hospitals.

this trend was first noticed in the Southern European countries such as Italy, France and Spain which have been one of the worst hits of the pandemic so far when their sales of medical supplies went up by 286% in early March. In France, where a country wide quarantine had even been imposed saw a rise in the sales of medical supplies to about 600%, out pacing even food sales. Nigeria and other countries are not too far behind on this trend as awareness has been created on basically every social media platform at this point about how the disease can be spread easily. The sale of medical supplies such as disposable hand gloves, surgical masks and thermometers and even goods such as alcohol based hand sanitizers and hand soaps have experienced a massive boost during this period. Every time you step out, you hardly see people who are not wearing surgical masks or at least something to cover their mouths and noses and gloves of some sort with hand sanitizers within reach. The public places which cannot be closed down during these periods such as hospitals install hand sanitizer dispensers everywhere possible and advise people to make use of them as often as possible.

7] **There is an Increased rate of online transactions**: due to the news reports we have seen about the corona virus disease, people are extremely afraid of it because of the fact that doctors and other professionals in the medical field are yet to create a vaccine or cure for it. And the ever rising death toll is also not happy news to people. Some, unlike the ones who still have the occasional contact with the outside world going to buy essential commodities such as food and water, have cut off all forms of contact with the world outside the safety and comfort of their homes completely. You may be wondering how this is possible and I will tell you how. The technology of today’s world is so advanced that people can sit back in the comfort of their homes and order whatever they wish to online with just a few clicks of buttons on their phones. Some people are even willing to go the extra mile to do away with whatever aspects of their diets are not readily available on online markets so as to completely cut off contact with people outside of their homes and ensure that they are safe at all times. So the increased patronage of online stores and markets is another trend that has developed from the outbreak of the corona virus disease 2019.

Reference

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