**18/law01/114**

**Explain the pandemic and how it affects consumer buying behavior  
  
  
What is corona virus?**

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus.

The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell.

Corona viruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans.  In humans, several corona viruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered corona virus causes corona virus disease COVID-19. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered corona virus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.   
The corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is no exception. The disease - an epidemic that could become a global pandemic - emerged in a densely populated manufacturing and transport hub in central China and has since spread to 29 other countries and regions (as of 20 February 2020), carried along by Chinese New Year and international travel.

In contrast to the Western Africa Ebola emergency of 2013-2016 – more deadly but less contagious, arguably more isolated, and eventually contained in part by richer countries putting money into Africa – COVID-19 presents larger, more interdependent economies with management dilemmas. It has also surfaced at a time of [eroding trust within and between countries](https://www.mmc.com/insights/publications/2020/Jan/the-global-risks-report-2020.html) – with national leadership under pressure from growing societal unrest and economic confrontations between major powers.

[**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don’t develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

**How Does The Virus Spread**

Corona virus disease spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze. It also spreads when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.

People can contact COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

WHO is assessing ongoing research on the ways COVID-19 is spread and will continue to share updated findings?

**Can it be transmitted from a person with no symptoms?**

The main way the disease spreads is through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is coughing. The risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms at all is very low. However, many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true at the early stages of the disease. It is therefore possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill.  WHO is assessing ongoing research on the period of transmission of COVID-19 and will continue to share updated findings.

**The cure for covid-19 or corona virus**

Not yet. To date, there is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-2019. However, those affected should receive care to relieve symptoms. People with serious illness should be hospitalized. Most patients recover thanks to supportive care.

Possible vaccines and some specific drug treatments are under investigation. They are being tested through clinical trials. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop vaccines and medicines to prevent and treat COVID-19?

The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are too frequently clean your hands, cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue, and maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

[Things](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses) we should abstain from;

The following measures **ARE NOT** effective against COVID-2019 and can be harmful:

* Smoking
* Wearing multiple masks
* Taking antibiotics  
    
  **In any case, if you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early** to reduce the risk of developing a more severe infection and be sure to share your recent travel history with your health care provider.

**The Source of COVID-19**

Currently, the source of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus (CoV) causing COVID-19 is unknown. All available evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 has a natural animal origin and is not a constructed virus. SARS-CoV-2 virus most probably has its ecological reservoir in bats. SARS-CoV-2, belongs to a group of genetically related viruses, which also include SARS-CoV and a number of other CoVs isolated from bats populations. MERS-CoV also belongs to this group, but is less closely related.

**How has the pandemic affected consumer buying**

The challenges facing the world right now are shaking up global economies, pushing healthcare systems to their limits, and up heaving 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 corona virus, 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.

The widespread outbreak of corona virus, which causes the disease COVID-19, is now a global pandemic.

Amid all the uncertainty and calls for [social distancing](https://www.criteo.com/insights/coronavirus-retail-trends/), some industries will be affected more than others. Restaurants and bars are particularly vulnerable, as well as event spaces and retail stores. At the same time, consumers are [shifting their spending habits](https://www.criteo.com/insights/coronavirus-consumer-trends/) and some companies and [product categories](https://www.criteo.com/insights/coronavirus-shopping-trends/) are actually growing.

**The Global Impact**  
  
The speed and global spread of corona virus has brought about a huge shift in people’s behavior, such as bulk-buying or self-isolating. The virus has led to our environment becoming increasingly ‘liquid’, subject to change and operating without familiar context and predictable patterns. With these shifts in consumer behavior, how can brands stay relevant to want their customers want?

Corona virus means brands need to be flexible and adapt to change. When the context and pattern in which people live changes, brands should ask themselves how can I add value considering this new reality?

As many brands seem uncertain about how, or even if, they should respond, this paper looks at how firms can pursue consumers in the right way and deliver value in a time of contextual fluidity. While, of course, it is vital to avoid being seen as a crisis profiteer, there are a number of ways brands can play enhanced roles in people’s lives in a period of time where people are out of their automatic behavioral rhythms. There is little doubt we are now making decisions in a time of distress, making us more likely to pay attention to the brands willing engage with us in the right way.

Waves of panic buying triggered by the rapid global spread of the novel corona virus (COVID-19) are a mass psychological phenomenon worth pondering. Irrespective of cultures and national borders, each stage of the epidemic’s escalation has quickly resulted in the affected population raiding shops. To be sure, some of the stockpiled items are directly associated with disease prevention, such as face masks and hand sanitizer. But there has also been a mad rush for general household staples, despite there being no indication of impending shortage. Shoppers settle into new normal as product shortages and stock-up behaviors decline.

The most frequently cited impact on shopping behavior continues to be product shortages, but the number of consumers reporting this impact declined for the first time this week. For the second week in a row, we also saw a decline in stock-up behaviors. Additionally, over half of consumers said they are delaying purchases of non-essential goods or services, and more than a third said stores they would otherwise go to are closed. All of these behaviors are indicative of the new albeit temporary normal in which we see consumers stepping back from non-essential activities and purchases.

Corona virus is shaking up business and consumer behavior on a massive scale. Both the public and private sectors are scrambling to slow the spread of the illness and contain COVID-19 infections. While the full economic consequences of this black swan event are still unclear, we know that the effects that the virus—and the drastic measures being taken to contain it—are already precipitating change across industries. Here are the top three ways Business Insider Intelligence and eMarketer analysts think the pandemic is set to impact telecoms and technology, digital media, payments and commerce, fintech, banking, and healthcare.

**The clearest and most immediate business impact of the corona virus pandemic has been a major disruption to supply chains.** Having originated in China, the region was hit hard as a large number of citizens contracted the disease and many were forced into quarantine. This led to partial and full shutdowns of plants and factories, some of which were being used by prominent technology companies to manufacture their goods and products.

No surprise: Sales of facemasks and household cleaning supplies, which can be used to reduce the chance of contracting or spreading the virus, also shot up in early March compared to the first week in January—before running out of stock.

Effective governance of cross-border crises such as pandemics involves preparedness, response and recovery at local, national and international levels. [Epidemic preparedness assessments](https://gh.bmj.com/content/4/1/e001157) show many countries, especially in regions where new pathogens might emerge, are not well equipped to detec,t report and respond to outbreaks.

Response strategies vary, for example: playing up or playing down crises and staying open for business as long as possible versus seeking to reopen quickly. COVID-19 has highlighted tendencies in many countries to deny or cover up red flags in order to avoid economic or political penalties, but this approach can misfire.

With tens of millions of workers now in quarantine and parts in short supply, Countries are struggling to get economic activity back on track. Countries with well-honed crisis risk-management arrangements are faring better at slowing the spread of infection, although that does not make them immune to political and economic pressures.

COVID-19 has also shown how governance failures may involve inaction or over-zealous action by ill-prepared authorities scrambling to maintain or regain stability. Both ends of the spectrum undermine trust and cooperation among citizens and countries. Centralized control measures may seem necessary to stop or delay the spread of the virus, and compensate for weak individual and community resilience, but may also cause harm.

**Control deprivation**

The research includes a series of studies written up in the paper, “Control Deprivation Motivates Acquisition of Utilitarian Products”, published in the Journal of Consumer Research. In it, we found that a group of participants who had been asked to recall a situation where they had felt a low sense of control over their environment bought more practical items (e.g. cooking ingredients and household cleaners) during a supermarket trip, compared to another group who were asked to recall a time when they were well and in control. Follow-up studies showed that consumers whose sense of control was threatened were far more likely to favour functional sneakers over more fashionable footwear or book a therapeutic massage over a relaxing one.

Loss of control doesn’t mean being out of control or lacking self-discipline. It refers to the everyday, fundamental experience of being unable to take action to help address a situation or produce a desired outcome in a given environment. It is important to note that loss of control differs from a lack of autonomy, which is when people feel they lack the power to act according to their own will. Unlike consumers feeling out of control, autonomy-seeking consumers tend to prefer products that bolster their individuality, such as status symbols that communicate uniqueness, or items that can be used or displayed in a variety of ways.

**References**

[**www.critereo.com**](http://www.critereo.com)[**www.agilitypr.com**](http://www.agilitypr.com)[**www.ipsos.com**](http://www.ipsos.com)[**www.emarketer.com**](http://www.emarketer.com)[**www.nielsen.com**](http://www.nielsen.com)[**www.businessamlive.com**](http://www.businessamlive.com)