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DEPARTMENT: LAW

BUS 208 ASSIGNMENT

 COVID-19 INFECTION

 The corona virus disease is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by a severe acute respiratory syndrome which emerged in Wuhan, China and spread around the world. Corona viruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans, several corona viruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

 ORIGIN, SYMPTOMS AND MODE OF TRANSMISSION.

 Recently, at the end of 2019, Wuhan an emerging business hub of China experienced an outbreak which killed more than 18,000 and infected over 70,000 individuals within the first fifty days of the epidemic. Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Corona virus has spread around the world, and been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. There has been several confirmed cases a confirmed deaths in many countries around the world. But according to WHO, most people who contact the disease recover and many may never notice that they had it in at all.

 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 get COVID-19 become very ill and develops difficulty in breathing. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes are more likely to develop serious illness.

 People can catch 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. The droplets land on surfaces and objects around the person. Other people who do not have the virus get infected by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch it if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. The risk of catching the disease from someone with no symptoms is very low which is why individuals are advised to stay away from anyone that is coughing.

 On the 18th of April 2020, 48 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Nigeria. Till date, 541 cases have been confirmed, 166 cases have been discharged and nineteen deaths have been recorded in Nigeria. Due to the wide spread of the pandemic and in order to prevent more deaths, the Nigerian Government announced on March 30th that there should be a compulsory lockdown in place. The lockdown does not apply to those providing essential services, such as food distributors and retailers, including market stalls selling food and groceries, which the government has said can operate for four hours every 48 hours.

The lockdown, however, prevents many Nigerians working in informal sectors from traveling to work or conducting their business. Local food vendors and traders have expressed fears over their ability to feed their families during the lockdown, with their daily earnings their only source of sustenance. An increase in food prices as a result of the lockdown also means that many cannot stock up on necessities. The informal sector in which 80% of Nigerians work includes a wide range of occupations, from street traders, taxi drivers, tradesmen, and artisans to food vendors and hairdressers. In Lagos alone, according to research by nongovernmental organizations, 65 percent of the estimated 25 million people work in the informal sector. Informal workers have lower incomes, often do not have savings, health insurance, or pensions that provide a basic social safety net, and 72 percent are poor.

 EFFECT OF COVID-19 0N CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

 Consumer buying behavior is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behavior in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service. The study of consumer behavior draws upon social science disciplines of anthropology, psychology, sociology, and economics.

 Various ways the pandemic has affected consumer buying include;

PRODUCT CATEGORIES SHIFTING:

 As people are making buying choices based on new and ever-changing global and local circumstances, the product categories that are being purchased are also changing.

In countries heavily impacted by COVID-19, consumers are stockpiling food and other essential items, while isolating themselves from crowds. To find out how and when consumers started showing these behavioral changes, Nielsen1 conducted shopper behavior research that started during the beginning of the pandemic in China and extended to other countries that have also been affected. They monitored consumer trends, as COVID-19 news reached the general public and found out that consumers go through six behavioral stages based on their awareness of the COVID-19 spread in their communities:

- Proactive health-minded buying (purchasing preventative health and wellness products).

-Reactive health management (purchasing protective gear like masks and hand sanitizers).

-Pantry preparation (stockpiling groceries and household essentials).

-Quarantine prep (experiencing shortages in stores, making fewer store visits).

-Restricted living (making much fewer shopping trips, limited online fulfillment).

-A new normal (return to daily routines, permanently altered supply chain).

The study also found out that consumers typically moved from one stage to another in a period of two weeks in areas close to the initial outbreak. However, this happened much faster in other countries where the outbreak started later, such as Italy and the US. Currently, the only country where consumers are starting to transition to the sixth stage is China, while the US has begun to move towards restricted living. So, what kind of possible long-lasting consumer behavior shifts can we expect as a result? It’s still too early to tell, but clear trends can be seen, which, if sustained, could lead to significant shifts in how consumers shop in the future.

 Some of the products most affected include;

 1. Health and safety products; Anyone who has faced empty shelves or seen price gouging online knows that health and safety products are being purchased far faster than they can be produced and restocked. According to data from Nielsen, items like hygienic and medical mask sales are up by more than 300%.

2. Shelf-stable goods; Another category of consumer packaged goods that is booming is shelf-stable items. These fit into the category of people planning for long-term quarantine. According to Nielsen, products like shelf-stable milk and milk substitutes (particularly oat milk) are up by more than 300% in dollar growth. Other items seeing increases are things like dried beans and fruit snacks that have a long shelf life.

3. Food and beverage; In addition to long-term quarantine type items, for groceries in general, sales are up. However, there are some behavioral changes around the way people are buying groceries.

For example, in an effort to avoid crowds at supermarkets, many people are choosing BOPIS (buy-online-pick-up-in-store) or delivery options. Downloads of apps like Instacart and Shipt that allow people to hire personal shoppers to prepare and in some cases deliver their grocery orders have increased by between 124% (for Shipt) and 218% (for Instacart). People are also choosing to buy these items from online stores more than they did prior.

Shipbob, a shipping and fulfillment partner for ecommerce stores, gathered data from 3,000+ of their merchants and is tracking the data. While the chart below shows some fluctuations, the month-over-month increase in online sales for food and beverage is 18.8%.

4. Digital streaming; While less about the immediacy of protecting and feeding themselves, it comes as no surprise that as people are homebound and no longer pursuing external entertainment options that there is an increase in digital streaming services. In addition to streaming services like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, and Disney+ seeing atypical gains in subscribers in the first quarter of 2020, non-traditional streaming services like movie studios are releasing media streaming, on-demand, sometimes earlier than projected release.5. Luxury goods; while the above products and services are increasing in sales due to the current situation, other industries are not doing as well. In addition to obvious ones like entertainment, restaurants, and travel, one area projected to have significant losses is the luxury goods industry.

6. Fashion and Apparel; even online apparel sales are down as people are putting more of their budgets into daily essentials.

CHANGES IN REVENUE ACROSS ECOMMERCE:

As people have embraced social distancing as a way to slow the spread of the pandemic, there has naturally been a drop-off in brick-and-mortar shopping. That would seem to mean there would likely be an increase in online shopping as people turn to ecommerce to purchase the items they might have otherwise purchased in person. In reality, ecommerce sales are not higher across the board, although some industries are seeing significant upticks. This is especially true for online sellers of household goods and groceries. JD.com, China’s largest online retailer has seen sales of common household staples quadruple over the same period last year. A survey by Engine found that people are spending on average 10-30% more online.

1. Grocery ecommerce.

Grocery ecommerce soared in the second week of March, after shoppers turned online to find the goods they needed but weren’t available at their local grocery stores. The following graph, with data from Rakuten Intelligence, shows a huge spike in grocery-related ecommerce. The rest of ecommerce seems like it might be up a little bit, but no drastic peaks or valleys. In addition to grocery, ecommerce covers a wide number of products, across categories. Common Thread Collective has been providing valuable updates with COVID data on ecommerce shopping behavior.

2. Subscription services.

While ecommerce sales do not generally appear to be skyrocketing as one might expect, there are some exceptions. One of these is in subscription and convenience services, which have seen significant upward trends in both revenue and conversion.

Performance branding company WITHIN has been tracking the effects of COVID-19 on ecommerce across a number of specific sectors by monitoring and comparing data from select businesses year-over-year.

 IN NIGERIA AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES;

 African governments fear the spread of the pandemic as there are more advanced medical equipment’s abroad than in Africa. They are also implementing social distancing measures, especially in local markets, where many buy their daily fruit and vegetables. Market traders, experts and informal trading associations say it is causing problems for the urban poor and limiting their access to food. Take Sandra for example,

“Because of the lockdown, people are not coming to buy and the street is so quiet. And you don’t see anyone on the road. I was selling at the market for three days but no one is coming,” says Sandra, who sells produce at a market in the Ghanaian capital Accra.

“Today I decided that this week I wouldn’t go in at all,” she told RFI by telephone from her home. She says she will have to throw out the tomatoes, peppers, okra and eggs she sells, as all will spoil before this coming Monday.

On Friday, 27 March, Ghana announced a two-week lockdown that would come into effect three days later —not enough time for Sandra or her market colleagues to sell their produce. Ghanaians can go out to buy food, but many have stayed home. “I’m worried about the money... I bought the things before. If I knew it was going to happen, I would have waited and kept the money,” she says, complaining that she would not have stocked up on perishable goods otherwise.

 The Federal Government has released 10billion Naira grant to Lagos State to increase its capacity to respond to the COVID19 outbreak.

This was made known by the Honorable Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, in a press briefing held at the Ministry's Headquarters today, 27th March 2020.

The Minister said, the sum of 5 billion Naira special intervention fund had also been released to NCDC to equip, expand and provide personnel to its facilities and laboratories across the country. The Federal Government, the minister stated ,has also through the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) made provisions to bring back essential NCDC staff who had been away on trainings and cannot return to Nigerians due to Instituted measures in other countries.

 The World Health Organization is encouraging people to play video games amid the coronavirus pandemic. Ray Chambers, U.S. ambassador to the WHO, tweeted his support, asking people to help continue social distancing efforts by picking up a game and helping save lives.

He used the hash tag (#PlayApartTogether ) as part of WHO’s growing movement to unite people around the world while also asking them to keep their distance.

 Everyone hopes that the pandemic would soon be over and everything would be back to normal.

REFERENCES:

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