

MATRIC NUMBER: 18/LAW01/074

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LEVEL: 200

COURSE TITLE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

COURSE CODE:BUS 208

QUESTION: In not less than 2000 words, Explain explicitly how the Pandemic (COVID 19) has affected consumer buying behavior.

Corona virus according to WHO(world Health Organization) is a compound of viruses or rather is a large family of viruses that are known to cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). It spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze. it also spreads when a person touches a surface or metal surface with the virus on it and then touches their eyes, ear, mouth or nose. It is known to be that there is a homogeneous relationship between the corona virus and metal surfaces, hence it lasts for as long as 12 hours on metal surfaces.

Corona virus also known as the Covid-19 virus is a pandemic and has had a major effect on the world at large and has changed the daily life and pattern of Consumer Behavior all over the world. To prevent the spread of this virus, leaders across the world have called for social distancing and national lockdown as a prevention technique. This decision has in turn affected industries and consumers; the economy in different ways as some industries and companies and their products are growing rapidly while some are depreciating.

1. High demand for shelf stable foods and grocery items growing substantially: It makes sense that these items are made for tough times when people need them. Long shelf life foods are versatile making it easier to stock up on ingredients that last. Sighted Examples; Companies of whom produce these products have spiked up their sales according to survey studies. Canned Evaporated and dry Milk sales have gone up by +378%, Canned beans by +433%, Canned veggies by +337%, Flours and rice by +432%. The favoring of non-perishable fruits were up by +297% and skyrocketed to +623%.
2. Huge sales of Medical supplies: Sales of medical supplies have soared high, no surprise the sale of face masks and other household cleaning items which can be used to reduce the chances of contracting or spreading the virus shot up early before running

out of stock. sales of medical supplies spiked up by +286% as seen by survey. for instance, France which had enacted a country wide quarantine, saw sales of medical supplies and shelf food products rising by nearly +600% .

3. Drastic decrease in the demand and need for items not necessarily important or otherwise seen as non-essential in the daily life of an individual or a consumer and huge increase in the demand for items of importance to the health and welfare of a consumer as presented in the database below.

Decrease in the demand for; beauty products by 56%, Alcohol intake by 57%, Luxury by 61%, Clothing and accessories by 66%, Travels by 91% Out of home Entertainment and Gatherings; both by 93% and Increase in the demand for; Medical/life insurance by 38%, Nutrition/Health products by 40%, Household cleaning items by 48%, Food and beverages by 49%, Medicine by 67%, Advanced epidemic prevention products by 70% and Basic epidemic prevention products by 88%.

4. Gains in e-commerce: Companies with strong digital footprints are extremely well placed to respond to changing consumer behavior. Instead of reducing all expenditures, buying habits of consumers have changed too. switching from offline activities to e-commerce. in a way bringing relief for the economy and setting course for rapid recovery.

5. High demand for online work tools: As offices close and employees are encouraged to work from home in compliance with the Covi-19 lockdown, many consumers are outfitting their spaces with items which would help them work comfortably and efficiently hence, interior design products, home improvement and office furniture, household products which we saw that its sales were spiked up by +13% and again by 8%.

Effects of the Covid-19 on consumer behavior both socially and economically.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 virus has had a major impact on daily life and consumer behavior. it has led to the lockdown of regions and cities with a population of over 500 million people being quarantined and a concurrent decline in production. A few of these negative effects are listed thus;

i. Distortion of World Sports Calendar- Postponed Olympics, Soccer Ban(Worldwide), Basketball games and even in Nigeria Okpeke games (EDO sports2020)

ii. Breach in Social Interactions thus introducing additional political issues- Governance affected, Top government functionalism affected

iii. Religious gatherings and activities suspended- with a few individuals and consumers losing interest in spiritual exercises and Up lifting.

iv. Effect on Economy- Poor funding, Hunger, market closures, gambling, complaints, poor stock markets, Agriculture and export products constraints, unpaid salaries.

v. Medicals- Drug productions limited, medical equipments under supplied and under produced.

vi. Legal implications- Judiciary activities suspended, impact on prisoners and detainees.

Despite the negative social and economic effects and impacts, this outbreak has completely changed the pattern of consumer behavior all over the world quickly led to an adjustment in peoples behaviors which is from fear to action in order to cope with this unexpected situation. The shift of daily activities from offline to online. Hence Consumer behavior is now FRENETIC.

Frenetic is best defined as the high rate of involving in activities in a way that is not organized.

Consumer behaviors experts and psychologists have taken notes of the changes which have occurred in this Covid-19 pandemic and thus have this to say. According to Ross Steinman, a professor of psychology at Widener University in the US State of Pennsylvania, she says "Consumers are refreshing and refreshing websites to secure grocery delivery times, purchase paper towels and scavenge for rice and canned soup from third party sellers on Amazon". She also stated that " A pronounced spike in corona virus cases will only amplify the frenetic".

When people lack knowledge and are in an uncertain situation, they tend to follow group's behavior and blindly conform but once they obtain more information and digest and process the information, panic gradually fades away.

During this Covid-19 pandemic, consumers generally feel jittery and anxious losing good sense of behavior and control. Consume behavior experts have also observed that unlike other recent global crises such as the September 11 attacks, corona virus is less a onetime sharp shock to the system and also a rolling source of anxiety that could retreat and resurface repeatedly with a sighted example stating that it was the same pattern with the Black death plague which hit Europe in 1347 an returned episodically over many years ultimately killing millions. Experts have suggested that consumer behavior may be permanently changed as a result of the pandemic. Economists have also advised against the need to shut down things again, stating also that the more it happens, more damage it does to the buoyant consumer behavior and psychology.

In all this, Combat methods put in place during this crisis are; Social Distancing, Lock down and Self isolation, Sensitization, Sanitation, Emergency health communication lines, Quarantine housing facilities, Improved health facility upgrade and Health workers

life insurance.

Consumer behavior is seen as extremely orthodox, often referred to as 'Status quo Bias' with captured expressions like "Past Behavior Best Predicts Future Behavior". Now Covid-19 crises forces us to change our behavior radically which might enable us the consumers discover new ways that suits us better.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR amidst this corona virus is hence radically altered as the world entreats into "SURVIVAL MODE".

In Summary Consumers while isolating themselves have constructed some trends and changes which have been monitored to go through six behavioral stages based on their awareness of the Covid-19 spread in their communities thus mentioned;

- i. Proactive health-minded buying: Increased interest in the acquisition of products that maintain well-being or health
- ii. Reactive health management: Prioritization of products for infection containment that is face masks.
- iii. Pantry preparation: Higher purchases of shelf-safe products and increased store visits
- iv. Quarantined living preparation: Increased online shopping, decreased store visits and first signs of strain on the supply train
- v. Restricted living: Possible price gauging due to limited supplies and deterred online fulfillment.
- vi. Living a new normal: Increased health awareness even as people return to their typical daily activities.

This 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 the 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 behavior shifts can we expect as a result? it is still too early to tell, but clear trends can be seen, which, if sustained, could lead to significant shifts in how consumes shop in future.

The Complexity of the crisis, number of variables and its magnitude makes consumer recovery unprecedented and difficult to predict.

In conclusion; The pandemic has however destroyed isolationism and glorified Internationalism. A somber lesson for countries that have promoted ultra nationalism. This is revealed in the fact that a third world country like Cuba has produced interferon Alpha2B drug which has so far proved to be the most effective vaccine against the pandemic such that Italy, one of the most hit countries and some other 37 countries are beings assisted by CUBA.

Members of the Group of 20 most viable economies (G20) have invited CUBA to assist in the fight against the pandemic. UK sought them to assist them on their stranded Nationals in the Caribbean Territorial Waters.

Capitalism has thus been challenged. Serious countries now provide funds to help keep jobs and health of the people. Loans are now made available without tough conditions, debts are being rescheduled or cancelled. The pandemic challenge has made a strong case for a new international economic order in line with consumer behavior and Nigeria our own dear country has not been an exception considering her efforts in fund donations by individuals and organizations, boosts in health sector upliftment, traders money, palliatives in food provisions, awareness in governance, quarantine lockdown, social distancing or physical distance and so on.

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