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**COURSE CODE: BUS 208**

**COURSE TITLE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

**COLLEGE: LAW**

**DEPARTMENT: LAW**

**LEVEL: 200**

**QUESTION**

In not less than a 2000 words, explain explicitly how the pandemic(COVID 19) has affected consumer buying behavior?

***ABSTRACT***

*Consumer Behavior is a self-explanatory concept which focuses more on consumer’s related activities of the individual as he goes about his buying interactions and exchange. It entails comparison of different and similar products or services. As we all know, the consumer uses the product for his own use which eventually leads to maximum utility. However, there are different factors which affect consumer buying behavior. One of which is a world-wide pandemic. This paper seeks to critically examine how the current pandemic is affecting the consumer buying behavior of Nigerians.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria as we know it, is a third-world country, a country still in its prime. Headlines on national news have proven that the Federal Government has enforced lock-down on schools, work places and even the market place is restricted in its buying and selling transactions. As human beings, we have necessities such as our needs and wants. Man, as a human being has the innate need for survival and will do whatever it takes to satisfy that need. Considering the standard of Nigeria’s economy as well as her population, it is easy to say that engaging in the business of buying and selling especially in this critical stage of a world pandemic will be quite difficult.

The corona virus(COVID-19) pandemic has contributed to the inflation of the prices of goods and services. This is very evident in the trade sector of the economy. The effects of restriction measures to reduce the spread of the virus is already being felt by Nigerians. For instance, Lagos, one of the largest cities in Nigeria, has had the hardest hit. Small businesses and market traders have been really affected by the lock-down. Research has shown that the restriction in movement has disrupted supply. This was said by one **Olatunji Okesanya.** Same source also says that farmers find it difficult to transport their produce to Lagos. Apparently, those who are able to do so are said to have bribed the security agents in order to get their produce to sell. These farmers in particular are going to incur great losses due to this pandemic. Perishable foods worth thousands of Naira will literally perish. Now, how will this factor affect the buying behavior of Nigerians? Even with the general saying that ***nothing go pass African man belle***, safety precautions must be taken. There is a balance of the consumer and trader ratio. Most consumers as well as traders are very upset about the lock-down. This has resulted in protests against the Federal Government. Extreme cases have shown where traders open market secretly and sell their goods at really high prices. This has really affected the consumer because at this point in time, most people prefer to buy in bulk. Those who cannot afford to do so have to make do with what they have, live within their means. This means that they have to resort to buying products at the drop of a hat.

Al Jazeera reported that this has been a very difficult time for individuals who earn the minimum wage, which is barely enough to provide for a child, more or less, an adult as well as those who live hand to mouth. Those individuals definitely have a different form of consumer buying behavior. The low-class basically and literally eat whatever and whenever they have to. There is a need for survival and these set of people may not have even have a consumer buying behavior. This is because they may resort to stealing, breaking and entering and even armed robbery to survive.

It is said that the world is a global village. During this trying time, we are going to see that technology will really have a great effect on individuals especially when it deals with consuming. Now, we are well accustomed to the fact that developed countries such as The United States, The United Kingdom, China are all well advanced with technology. Can we say the same about Nigeria? Now, Nigeria has been an adopter of the internet since 2012. How far will the internet go to serve consumers during this trying time? Now there are different headlines such as: **Online buying soars as corona virus spreads around the world, Corona virus will have long lasting impact on online grocery.** Apparently, the corona virus pandemic has increased e- commerce. In America, most people have decided it is safer to order for products online. In Nigeria, as at 2018, statistics have shown that 56% of Nigerians between the ages of 25 and 34 shop online, 17% of Nigerian youths also shop online and the elderly(those above 44 years of age) make up the remaining 27%. This seems to be a healthy amount of participation in the e-commerce industry. How will this affect the consumer’s buying behavior? It goes two ways. It can either be good or bad. How? The pro of this is that delivery will be easier and faster depending on the product ordered for. It also saves time and does not consume a lot of energy. The con of online shopping can be a misconception of the product ordered for, receiving damaged goods and most importantly, the lack of satisfaction of not being able to handpick the product one wants as well as getting a good price for such product. Nevertheless, the electronic commercial market has soared high in sales. Despite the pros and cons of shopping online, the general idea of the consumer during this epidemic is that online shopping is safer.

It has been mentioned earlier that one of man’s necessities is food. How will the need to eat affect the consumer’s buying behavior. We all have to eat to survive. Coupled with online shopping, the U.S online purchases of shelf-stable grocery items have grown substantially in the last few days, including rice(432%), flour(423%),canned& jarred vegetables(337%), canned& prepared beans(433%) and canned and dry milk(378%). Now, these items are made for tough times when people may need to hunker down. They are mostly non-perishable, have a long shelf life, are versatile, are frequently offered in large formats which make it easy to stock up on ingredients that last. In relation to Nigeria, this is highly true only with a slight difference.

Due to this global pandemic faced by millions worldwide, some countries have decided to go on full lock down, Nigeria inclusive. This is evident in states like, Abuja, Ogun, Lagos, Rivers States. Although this measure has been taken to ensure the safety of her citizens, it has also greatly affected the way consumers buy things as well as consume products; goods and services alike. Let us look at this theory. For middle class people, no work equals no money. Now we are in quarantine and all shops are temporarily closed until said otherwise by government. This will definitely affect the average man. The consumer related models of man has shown us that the **Economic man** makes rational decisions on what he is to buy depending on his decisions. The rich however may take to the model of the **Cognitive man**. He is a problem solver and his ultimate goal is to fulfill his needs. This global pandemic affects us all differently and can be classified according to the categories society has created for each individual.

According to an eye witness in Rivers State, most malls and supermarkets are filled with customers whenever the lockdown is released temporarily. Due to the intensity of the pandemic, fights often break out over foodstuffs, toiletries and other essential necessities. These supermarkets are also consumers in a sense. They supply the goods and services but they also receive from wholesalers. Most times, we have witnessed more than two supermarkets having nothing to offer as a result of lack of stock. If they cannot restock on goods, it affects the whole country. In order to provide as well as to survive, they need constant supply of goods and services. Nigeria is a developing country and more than 50% of her goods depend on import. We have the problem of tax, customs and excise to think about. Having borders closed ultimately affects the consumer at the grass root since production is not complete until it gets to the **final consumer.**

In conclusion, these are the current problems plaguing Nigerians and how it has affected the way and manner in which they purchase goods. According to Aristotle, man is a political animal **zoon politikon,** he fights for his vested interests. In other words, despite what looms ahead, as human beings, we will always find a way to survive.

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