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Research Article

Effect of second wave of COVID-19 on customer behavior: Will old habits come back or die?

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our working practises, transportation, connectivity, commerce, and more, as well as consumer behaviour. Market buying and shopping habits have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, lockout, and social distancing. Consumers are adapting to new situations and learning new habits. While consumers may return to old habits, new rules and practises are likely to transform the way consumers shop for and buy products and services. New trends may emerge as a result of technological advancements, demographic shifts, and innovative ways for consumers to handle work from home occupations, leisure, and schooling.

Keywords: COVID Pandemic, Consumer Preferences, New Shopping Rules

Introduction:

Any customer behaviour is strongly influenced by the environment and time. Recent research reveals that personal and psychological factors significantly influence consumers' decisions to buy products (Alexandri, Sam' and Raharja, 2020) Based on traditions, geographies, and other factors, behaviour may vary greatly from one place to the next. This aspect of customer behaviour is becoming more complicated as a result of the pandemic (Bohn, 2021). The aim of this paper is to investigate the impact of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic on consumer behaviour. Will consumers' shopping habits be permanently altered as a result of lock-ups and community inequalities, or will they revert to their pre-financial-crisis lifestyles? Would the latest rules governing air tours, shopping mall experiences, concerts, and sporting events enable customers to adopt new habits? Is it better for customers to visit a typical store or attend a social gathering in person, or is it more convenient for the store or event to come to them?

Over the time, consumers build preferences on how, where and where to eat (Sheth, 2020a, Sheth, 2020b). It also applies to shopping, information gathering and the recycling of waste after consumption. And consumers' behaviour is extremely stable; we have several strong models and feedback on consumers focused on previous repeated person purchasing behaviour. Conflictingly, this years of pandemic and lock downs could require the consumer to go past conventional ways and sculpt their conduct according to the new normal. (Bohn, 2021))

There are four main contexts that control or disrupt user preferences. Firstly, the social context is shifted by activities such as wedding, kids and transportation as of from one community to another. The communal background involves the working environment, the city, its neighbors and their families. Technology is second; and as advanced technology develops, old habits are broken. Smart phones, the internet and ecommerce are the most spectacular technological burst through in current time. The method through which we buy and consume our goods and services has significantly influenced online search and online purchasing.

The third context that influences consumer habitat is regulations and policies, particularly in community and common areas, as well as the consumption of unhealthful foods. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and handguns, for example, is restricted in the region. Clean electricity, hybrid cars, obligatory automobile and house cover, and child-care vaccination are also examples of safe social goods and services that can be promoted by public policy.

The fourth and least stable history is one of sporadic natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and global pandemics such as the Covid 19 pandemic. Military conflicts, civil wars, and real world wars, such as the second global warfare, the cold war, and the GRDs of the late 1920s and 2008–2009, are also occurring. There are also international conflicts. Both the consumption and production chains, as well as the supply chain, are severely disrupted. The aim of this paper is to investigate Covid-19's immediate and long-term effects on consumption and consumer behaviour.

Immediate impact of COVID 19 on consumer behavior

With lockout and social distancing, consumers' shopping options are restricted. The size and position of the region have been reduced. There has been a change in our versatility, as well as a lack of mobility. At the same time, consumers have more flexibility because they are not bound by jobs, school, shopping, or consumption plans.

The time and place are anchored, as discussed above, in both consumption and consumer behaviour. Ever more women have worked since World War II, which reduced free time. This resulted in shortfall of time for both family and self along with shifting of time for various activities. From Monday to Friday, nobody will do installs and maintenance work on equipment or restore damaged heating and cooling. To guarantee that everyone is at home to unlock the gates, the retailer had to arrange appointments with the household according to their availability. This lack of time led to shoppers shopping online and delivering goods home. The same is true of the holidays that have been arranged around the most significant vacations. This break is also not more than two to three weeks at a time.

During COVID, due to a scarcity of breathing space at residence, novel quandary and questions arise about who would do what at home. We are more territorial as Homo sapiens in general, and everybody needs their own room; and hence, we all struggle with privacy and warmth.

Instantaneous consequence of Covid-19 on Consumption Behavior

1. Inventiveness: When there are limits, consumers learn to improvise. Present patterns are then abandoned and new forms of consumption are invented. The corona virus has unleashed business ingenuity and endurance for traditional practices such as marriages and funeral services. The usual locations are replaced by sidewalks and home.

Another area of future research is improvisations to deal with shortages of products or services. It contributes to ground-breaking practises, such as Telehealth and online learning, which are often used as alternatives to centralized locations. Over and over, there is no formal empirical or theoretical improvisation research in progress. In India, jugaad is the closest thing to improvisation. By overcoming social expectations and policy constraints, such strategies can be created. Jugaad also refers to doing something for a small group of people and looking for opportunities in adversity (Radjou, Prabhu and Ahujo, 2012).

2. Hoarding: Customers store vital goods that lead to temporary stockpiling and scarcity in everyday consumption. The list includes bread, water, beef, toilet paper, disinfectants and supplies for washing.

Hoarding is a typical response to the shortage of commodity supplies for essential needs in the future. Hoarding is a common occurrence in Venezuela when a nation is experiencing hyperinflation. Besides hoarding, the grey market often develops in which illegal intermediaries host the commodity and raise costs. It is true in respect to the materials required for health professionals, including the N95 masks and PPE (personal security equipment).

3. Pent-up Request: The general inclination is to delay the acquisition and use of disposable commodities or services in times of recession and incertitude. This is often associated with long-term products default in payment, like cars, homes and machines. It also covers facilities such as recital, athletics, bars and restaurants.

As a result, the demand will be changed in the future. If access to the market for services such as parks and recreation, films and entertainment is denied for a short amount of time, the increased demand is expected. Economists have analysed the impact of increasing demand on GDP growth, but little research has been done on the scope and magnitude of the growing demand in consumer behaviour.

4. Shops come home: As a consequence of complete lockout in nations such as India, China, Italy, South Korea and others, customers were incapable of going to the grocery stores or to shopping malls. As a solution the stores came home. The distribution of labor, education, wellbeing and buying and consumption is reversed here. In the house, entertainment sites like Amazon Prime, Disney and Netflix break up the strange patterns of the physical use of bricks and mortars. It also improves user comfort and personalization. What needs to be examined empirically is

how the push to purchase and being prepared against unexpected consumption is affected by the concept of "Everything in home".

5. Digital engineering embrace: Consumers have embraced a variety of new technologies and solutions out of sheer need. A good example is Zoom camera systems. Many internet households have learned to hold zoom meetings simply to keep in touch with family and friends. Naturally, the system has expanded to TV, allowing doctors and other medical staff to make simulated trips to remote classrooms at home for colleges and universities.

The internet is a diverse and globally accessible platform. China and India are no longer the biggest nations in the population. It is Face book, YouTube and WhatsApp. More than a trillion subscriptions and customers are available to everyone. The meaning and extent of words and recommendations and the exchange of knowledge have drastically changed.

Influencer marketing is one of the quickest-growing industries. Both of them have millions of followers. The effect of new technology on customer behaviour in general, and in social media in particular, is significant and pervasive in consumers' daily lives. It's interesting to see how the application of new technologies disrupts traditional practises. Despite the fact that we researched the distribution of imagination for telephones, television, and the Internet, we did not observe global social media acceptance in an extremely compressed cycle.

6. Smudging boundaries of work-life: Customers are home bounded with little room and many discreet tasks, for example working, studying, shopping and socializing. This is similar to many demands and scarce resource funding. As a result, the boundaries of work and home and other activities are blurred. To make home more functional and efficient, a kind of programme and partitioning is required.

7. Friends and family meetings: One of the biggest effects of the corona virus is contacting distant friends and relatives, to make sure they are all right and share stories. It looks like secondary school, college gatherings or marriages. We are together on our patio, symbolically, and chatting to our neighbors all over the world.

Social networks such as Zoom and WhatsApp play an important part in the worldwide scope of society. Consumption trends' sociological and educational assimilations must be investigated. Parallel to standard studies such as (Reisman, D. 1953); (B, 1970); and (Simon and Schuster, 2000), it is anticipated that the Covid Pandemic's swift and pervasive adoption of new technologies would result in dramatic changes in consumer behaviour.

8. Talent Discovery: With the flexibility of the kitchen, buyers have done trials with foods, exercised their talents, and carried out innovative and imaginative ways to amuse self. YouTube and its colleagues are full of innovative content and financial achievements.

Will old habits die or return?

It is possible that the majority of the routines will return to standard. However, any practice is bound to die because a more comfortable, inexpensive and accessible alternative has been discovered in the lock-out situations. For instance, Netflix and Disney are given as subscription platforms.

Such options are similar to Uber, and are easier to use than to request a taxi. It will be safer for consumers to remain at home, read at home and research rather than facing corona virus. In short, the approach towards the current habit is at the present the primary and the former habit is the marginal solution.

Changed habits and behaviour: Established food and supply practices will in most cases be altered with the current rules and laws, such as the wearing of masks and maintaining social distance. In Asia, consumers wear masks when going to shop or using mass transport services. In the service industries, modified behaviors' are more common, particularly in individual services such as salons, physical therapy and fitness centre's. That would also be a reality for libraries, beaches, recreational centre's, festivals and social activities, to name only a few.

New habits and behaviour: Three issues are more expected to result in new habits. Foreign and public transportation being the first. More testing and embarking procedures will be performed, including temperature checks, virus tests, and flight boarding, in the same way as have been scanned for safety checks at airports since 9/11. The major aviation companies are now introducing new procedure for traveler boarding and landing and food facilities. As previously discussed, government policies to deter or promote consumption are very effective in shaping future consumption.

Technology is the second-largest driver of consumer success, as already stated. Since the Industrial Revolution, markets have significantly shifted with the advent of automobiles, electronics and aircraft. The material generated by the user was supplemented by the smart phone, television, internet and social media. For example, without a cell phone today you couldn't survive, but we did not miss it.

The World Wide Web is now as critical as electrical energy and small screen. Technology advancements play an important part in the introduction of new customs, such as internet shopping, online dating, and so on. It also has a major effect on family budgets due to the old needs (food, housing, and clothing) (phone, internet, and apps).

Third, changing cultures establish new customs ((Jagdish and R, 1999)). This is seen by a couple of examples. The development of advanced economies creates new health preservation (wellness) and rich preservation (retirement). The ageing population is also concerned about the protection and security of their personal property.

The household even acts as a family of the roommate, as more members attend the office. Every night dinners will no longer be eaten together. Any family member can go straight, after dinner, to their private spaces and participated in the text messages, YouTube or TV. Communal utilization conveniently makes room for individual consumption for each family member.

There is also a desire to remain alone by choice. In the United States, over one-third of households are single adults. This is for the first time in 18-29 years because of delays in marriage. With the ageing of the population, more

seniors (mainly women) live alone. Fresh patterns of what to purchase and when to procure are developed as one single individual. Socioeconomic, political and technical developments are important environmental drivers for the emergence and abandonment of new behaviors’.

Managerial implications

The effect of Covid-19 on customer behaviour has three management consequences. After clients have mastered how to improvise, businesses must now practice improvising in the event of a pandemic. Regulated businesses are often reluctant to alter standardised procedures rapidly.

Fortunately, improvisation was easier for bigger businesses switching because of cloud computing. The participants were supermarkets and large shops like Walmart and Target. For both scenarios, the latter converged and offered online shopping for their brick and mortar stores. In short, organisations can train to improve network, structure and operational flexibility and to handle world-wide disasters such as the Covid 19.

A subsequent management implication is that demand and supply are aligned. Any grocery, hypermarket and pharmacy retailer had chronic deficits due to the consumer's 'bank husbandry' approach in a crisis.

Supply chain, delivery and storage are key characteristics to be taken into consideration in the light of unexpected increases in demand. In addition to the existing practice of stock-on-the-shop by a contingency department in the backside of the store, this will be increasingly useful for promoting for on-line procurement and reversing the protocol from waiting for the customer and retail warehouse for the assembly of the command. As already mentioned, buyers who visit the shop are not identical to clients.

A third result is that people only go back to the old habits if their inventions, like zoom camera systems and online shopping, dramatically change their lives. In terms of both virtual and post acquisition (customer support) experiences consumers will be strategic investments. Also the automatization at “smart” companies in developing countries like India causes either unemployment or increase of the labor norms for unskilled workers, and Covid increase the chances of this happening((Bogoviz, Lobova and Alekseev, 2021)

Research implications

Because of the social distance between users, many new testing possibilities rooted in the real world, ranging from problem identification to knowledge searching, shopping and distribution to consumption and waste disposal have been created. These fields of observational study with any theory of hoarding, the flattening of working-life limits and the use of social media in a crisis are strong prospects for enriching market discipline. It is proved that in developing countries the potential of Industry 4.0 in stimulation of formation of the pleasure economy is very limited (Bogoviz, 2021); the same can researched upon, in reference to the pandemic.

Market resilience and improvisation are a key social sector for academic study. It is a modern area of study and has emerged from the Covid-19 crisis as a tremendous opportunity for science. For instance, do cultural variations exist worldwide in improvisation? What are the various methods for isolation from the infection by customers globally?

Finally, on Face book, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and zoom, Covid-19 has expanded the use of social media. They generate huge amounts of word-of-mouth numbers. Video interviews are not as useful as current analytical approaches. As we introduced natural language processing (NLP) for text analysis, we need to develop more techniques for analyzing video content that is possibly rooted in machine learning and artificial intelligence (Sheth, 2020a, Sheth, 2020b).

As we see in computer games and simulated sports, the virtual universe became more interested to users in comparison to the real world. Will it become real artificial? For e.g., in comparison to a real friend, does a friendship with a chatbot's girlfriend make it more relaxed and fun? Parmy Olson explains several anecdotes about how people deal with chatbot's in a new essay in the Wall Street Journal. According to the author, in China alone the social chatbot Microsoft XiaIce has over 660 million users. Putted simply, it has become phony.

Conclusion

Customers' behaviour has been disrupted as a result of the lockdown and psychological distancing implemented to combat CoV-19. Consumption may be time-bound or location-bound. With the flexibility of time but the rigidity of venue, consumers have been able to improvise dynamically and innovatively. Individuals now live at home, study at home, and relax at home, blurring the boundaries between work and life. Since the customer is unable to visit the store, the store must reach out to the customer.

When customers adjust to house arrest for an extended duration, emerging technologies are likely to be used to promote employment, research and consumption. It would certainly change the current behaviors' to embrace new technologies. In addition, government policies would introduce new consumption patterns, particularly in public areas such as airports, concerts and public parks.

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