

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN PURCHASING ESSENTIAL GOODS DURING COVID19: EVIDENCE FROM COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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A consumer is the king in a free market economy. The earlier approach of ‘caveat emptor’ - Let the buyer beware, has now shifted towards ‘caveat venditor’ – Let the seller beware. Consumer purchasing behavior also known as consumer buying behavior, refers to the behavior of a person before purchasing a product or a service. It involves various activities carried out by the customers before procurement of goods.

The consumer buying behavior is mainly based on two factors:

- Degree of buyer involvement
- Degree of differences among brands

On the basis of these factors, the buying decision behavior can be separated into 4 categories.

The year 2020 will go down in the history of retail as a year of overcoming problems and opening new possibilities. One of the benefits of an otherwise unfavorable situation is the fact that customers have begun to realize how important retail is to their daily lives. Covid-19 has changed the world of retail and the customer. Based on the comparison with the previous period, there was an increase in average spending and a decrease in the frequency of purchases. Consumer confidence has fallen; people are worried about the future. Retailers have invested billions in ant coronary measures and E-commerce is breaking records.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shristi Agarwal(2022), explained about the food habits of Coimbatore residents, during the pandemic. The major findings include factors affecting consumer decisions to buy daily essentials, and change in demand over time. The consumption activities before and during Covid were described in the study. Rationing of consumer incomes to various essentials such as Fresh produce, Fruits Vegetables, Dairy, Meat, Grains, Snacks, Fast food, Frozen food, Prepped meals, Bottled water have been analyzed. Convenience sampling was used and questionnaire was provided. The study covered 108 samples of Coimbatore city. The consumer behavior has changed and people started to rely on home cooking and that has

increased the demand for home stuffs. The purchase of groceries are influenced by availability, price, promotion of the product and location of the store.

VetriSelvi, B.Sekar, Senthilnathan, Vanitha(2021), analyzed the expenditure, income and consumer purchasing behavior of farmers in Coimbatore. A total of 210 respondents from the rural area Annur were selected for the study. The major finding of the study indicated that the income of rural people reduced to 17% and consumption expenditure and savings are reduced about 16% and 35%. Medical consumption has increased in the rural areas. The study concluded that the pandemic has not only affected the business activities, but also day to day lives of people.

N.Sudhakaren(2022), examined the buying behavior of consumers during Covid 19. The consumer preferences has shifted towards internet purchases. E-commerce business is growing and tends to attract new customers. Lockdown has reshaped the consumer purchasing behavior. As people were quarantined the production rates tend to fall and work from home became the new trend. Consumers are increasingly directed to buy online. Primary and secondary data were collected from newspapers, journals, reports, blogs, magazines, and conference papers, and other sources. The survey was performed over 200 respondents. The study found that Amazon was most used site, followed by Flipkart. ANOVA statistical analysis verifies the study.

Dr. Ratinder Kaur, Ms. Bhavna Sharma(2020), in their paper explained the impulsive buying behavior of essential goods during Covid. Panic buying was experienced in India and a negative effect was created in the minds of people. The major findings of the study include threat phenomenon and its effect on consumer buying behavior. The purchase of essential goods couldn't be restricted whereas the purchase of non-essential goods contracted. The study collected responses from 830 consumers and data was processed using SPSS 20.0 and utilized ANOVA and regression analysis. Media also contributed in threat development. The impact of income was a major determinant in purchase decisions.

Methodology

The questionnaire survey method will be used to achieve the goals of this article. The questionnaire survey take place online and the method of personal interviewing. The selection file will contain 414 respondents to be selected. To obtain relevant data, the random selection will be used to select the sample this guarantee maximum representativeness of the research. The selection will contain the entire structure of the surveyed file considering the age. The aim of the questionnaire survey will be to identify changes in consumer purchasing behaviour due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Results & Discussion

Consumer Behaviour - Food

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I changed my usual shopping	16.5	13.8	10.4	24.3	6.7
I gave priority to purchase in e-shops.	40.5	1.8	4.3	18.4	16.0
I have started to use the services of e-shop	35.0	5.5	8.0	1.4	16.0
I look forward to shopping at farmers	31.3	5.5	16.6	11.0	6.1

markets.					
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From the above table, it is inferred that 24.3% disagreed the changing style of usual shopping, 40.5% strongly agreed that they will give priority in purchasing in e-shops, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that they started to use the services of e-shop and 31.3% strongly agreed to the statement “I look forward to shopping at farmers markets.”

Consumer behaviour – Footwear and Fashion

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I started using e-shop services	32.5	44.8	19.6	0.6	2.5
I have started to use the services of e-shops to a greater extent.	22.1	46.6	27.6	1.2	2.5
Closing my stores led to a reduction in demand for footwear and clothing.	29.4	39.9	27.6	0	3.1
Closing shoe stores was a significant problem too me	23.9	41.1	28.2	4.9	1.8

From the above table, it is inferred that 44.8% agreed in using e-shop services, 46.6% agreed that they started to use services in e-shops, 39.9% of the respondents agreed that they stores led to a reduction in demand for footwear and clothing and 41.1% agreed to the statement “closing shoe stores was a significant problem.”

Consumer behaviour - Drugstore

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I gave priority to purchase in e-shops	41.1	31.9	24.5	1.2	1.2
I have started to use the survives of e-shops to a greater extend	25.2	42.9	22.7	4.9	4.3
To the same extend, I buy food in shops.	30.1	41.7	23.3	3.7	1.2

From the above table, it is inferred that 41.1% strongly agreed that they will give priority in purchasing in e-shops, 42.9% agreed that they started to use the survives of e-shops to a greater extend and 41.7% of the respondents agreed that they buy food in shops.

Consumer behaviour – Electronics

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I started using e-shop services	32.5	44.8	19.6	0.6	2.5
I have started to use the services of e-shops to a greater extent	22.1	46.6	27.6	1.2	2.5
Closing stores led to a decrease in demand for electronics.	29.4	39.9	27.6	0	3.1
Closing electronics stores was a significant problem for me	23.9	41.1	28.2	4.9	1.8

From the above table, it is inferred that 44.8% agreed in using e-shop services, 46.6% agreed that they started to use services in e-shops, 39.9% of the respondents agreed that Closing

stores led to a decrease in demand for electronics and 41.1% agreed to the statement “closing electronic stores was a significant problem.”

Conclusion

Based on the research, it can be concluded that there has been a change in consumer behaviour in the Czech Republic because of restrictions that have been introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19. In all analysed sectors - sales of food, drugstore goods and electronics there was an increase in sales volumes through online channels. For drugstore goods and food, there was a change in the structure of purchases and the frequency of purchases. Demand for footwear, and electronics which were closed due to government measures, decreased, despite a growing number of online purchases. The question remains whether the changes will be permanent, or customers will return to their original shopping habits.

Acknowledgement

The author truly acknowledges the Financial Support by GRG TRUST, Coimbatore with reference number GRG/53/2020 dated 28.09.2020

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