

Consumer behavior changes after COVID-19

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The goal of this research was to examine how people's behaviors have altered following the COVID-19 epidemic. 464 individuals took the online poll. Results show how consumer behavior has altered following the COVID-19 epidemic. Consumers that are younger, female, and/or lower income are more likely to discuss purchases and activities (65%). Almost three-quarters of people complete surveys, and many, particularly younger customers, utilize them to learn about items and offer company thoughts. Customers are worried about the quality of their shops. Less frequent than other shopping activities, planned and alone shopping is more common among the elderly. 65% of respondents find internet shopping easy, and 50% believe they save time and money. Women and young customers are more positive about buying online. Over 65% of customers explored new goods during the COVID-19 epidemic, and 50% are currently utilizing those items. After the COVID-19 epidemic, 40% of participants kept their new behaviors.

Keywords : Consumer Behavior, Covid-19, Pandemic

COVID-19 consumer behavior

When COVID-19 surfaced, Saudi Arabia took several efforts to reduce its health and economic implications. From the start of the epidemic, all citizens and foreigners in the Kingdom received free health care. Other remedies included shutting airports, creating lockdowns, transitioning to online work and schools, and giving financial incentives to hard-hit people and companies. The administration proclaimed normality within months. Malls, movie theaters, hotels, and restaurants might reopen, and people could return to work and airports. Normalcy returned in June 2020.

Since the COVID-19 epidemic began, many things have changed. COVID-19 affects health, social behavior, and buying behaviors. Since the pandemic began, many studies have examined consumer behavior, the impact of the supply chain on consumers (Rejeb, Rejeb, & Keogh, 2020), and prosocial consumption. Post-pandemic limits on marketing and consumer behavior related to COVID-19 have not been addressed. This research examines consumer behavior changes in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

Analyze works

Consumer behavior includes everything a buyer does, feels, or thinks. Global upheavals are testing consumers' attitudes and buying patterns, and the repercussions may continue beyond the epidemic. Since the epidemic, consumption habits have changed. Sheth (2020) said new restrictions and procedures, such mandating customers to wear masks and maintain their distance, would influence food buying and delivery habits.

Public policy (like temperature checks at airport check-in), technology (like online shopping), and shifting demographics (like families shifting from communal to individual consumption) are all likely to contribute to the emergence of novel routines. Some behavior changes are new, while others are adjusted. After the COVID-19 outbreak ends, individuals may display new behaviors.

Collaboration

Since the epidemic began, lockdown, quarantine, and social distance have been adopted, placing pressure on customers to maintain their customary social activities and share them with loved ones. "Social commerce" combines social networking and internet purchasing to let users critique online purchases. Since COVID-19, social commerce has grown. In social commerce, consumers depend on online friends' views while buying. Interpersonal connection between members in social commerce communities makes product knowledge more credible and important. This has affected information spread and word-of-mouth recommendations. Kim and Su (2020) claim that consumers learn to adhere to the purchase norms of their social groupings through watching others. People tend to copy their friends' offline and online spending habits during a crisis like COVID-19. Social connections substantially affect consumer purchasing. Since customers are more inclined to accept friends' recommendations than strangers', their friends' buying patterns weigh heavily when making a choice. Since the internet began, customers have depended extensively on online ratings, comments, and reviews of items and companies. Today's consumers seem to trust social media and online product reviews. Influential people in social commerce have a significant following, a tendency to write good evaluations, and peer support. Social commerce community members read, debate, and connect to other members' product and service evaluations. Online shoppers put

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a lot of weight in the views of dependable and friendly individuals, which might affect their purchase choices. Increased retail sensitivity.

People adapted their routines and shopping habits because of the pandemic. Eriksson and Stenius (2020) say these adjustments include hand washing, maintaining a safe distance while shopping, traveling off-peak, not bringing kids, purchasing fewer things more frequently, and utilizing contactless payments. The epidemic prompted unique buying trends as people worried about product safety. Locally sourced, clean commodities, and efficient distribution networks are being used to lessen product hazards. Customers were ready to pay extra for quality and safety-verified items. The epidemic changed many people's shopping habits. Because they couldn't go to the shop, many ordered groceries online. This includes accessing the internet for medical advice. Buyers and sellers demanded the adjustment. Many buyers requested delivery or pick-up options. Service providers needed these improvements to attract and maintain clients in a competitive environment. Eriksson and Stenius (2020) say internet buying, particularly among families with children and those at greater health risk, was the most important market development since the epidemic. This change may be long-lasting due to COVID's future goals (Jeewska-Zychowicz, Plichta, Królak, 2020).

Online grocery shopping has many benefits, including reduced stress, greater selection, and a lower risk of illness due to lack of personal contact. Consumers are still purchasing more food online than before the outbreak. Companies can use technology to learn more about consumers' preferences and shopping habits, improving their interactions with loyal brands. Advocacy

People began stockpiling medicine and nonperishable goods as the pandemic spread (Jeewska-Zychowicz, Plichta, & Królak, 2020). Pandemic uncertainty has caused consumers to stock up on all brands, shifting their brand loyalty. Consumers are buying online and in-store for basics. Lockdowns and quarantines reduced store or brand options or depleted stock for some brands, prompting a switch to alternative brands. Melo also mentioned customer requirements and incentives related to the pandemic (such as anti-bacterial soap) and buying delays.

Due to the above reasons, customers might test less well-known or new products, which could lead to a switch. Customers who had been assisted throughout the outbreak might return. Consumers may build a connection with them, to the expense of their relationships with other firms. Keeping loyal consumers may boost a company's earnings by 25% to 95% (Gallo, 2014).

Since the epidemic began, several firms have had trouble delivering their goods, especially airplanes, restaurants, and the tourist sector. This was due to government or public lockdowns, quarantines, and social isolation for safety. When limited, customers adopt unique behaviors. Radjou, Prabhu, and Ahujo (2012) define improvisation as solving problems despite social norms or official policy.

Businesses promoted "do it yourself" as a new way to buy their goods. The tendency may be observed in the increase of "ready-to-cook" meals at restaurants, the sale of coffee-making equipment with pre-measured components, and the convenience of home delivery via websites and apps for traditionally in-person services, such as buying a completely made lamp.

2. Hypotheses

Ages, sexes, marital statuses, occupations, incomes, education levels, and social classes affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Many studies utilize these indicators to better understand customer behavior and requirements. This research assessed the frequency of internet buying and family activities, among others. Mobile technology and additional time with family during COVID-19 led to these habits.

Researchers predicted customers' behaviors to change with the introduction of covids, therefore they compared these alterations to age, income, education, and occupation.

Then, we can propose these hypothesis

H1- Gender, age, monthly income, and degree of education influence social purchase behaviors.

H2 - Age, gender, income, and education all affect new consumer behavior.

H3 - Online shopping patterns differ by demographics.

Methodology

Using an online, self-administered survey, this research tested theories. The survey was distributed via social media apps to reach more consumers. The questionnaire needed every question answered to be valid. The survey was designed to characterize post-COVID-19 consumer behavior.

The second section of the questionnaire elicited five upcoming behavior changes. Five-level frequency questions (always, frequently, sometimes, infrequently, and never) probed respondents' familiarity with social commerce and shopping environment sensitivity. We used Likert scale questions ranging from very much so' to 'completely the opposite' to learn how people shop online. Five alternatives were given for maintaining newly developed habits during COVID-19: same or higher level, lower level, halted, never practiced, and same old habit.

The author built the study's questionnaire on previous research. So, the questionnaire's validity and reliability were tested to ensure precision and uniformity. Validity was first checked using content and construct validity. Two experts confirmed the study's accuracy and credibility. Factor analysis confirmed the questionnaire's construct validity, or the extent to which it measures the theoretical

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construct for which it was developed. Factor analysis evaluates how well each questionnaire item correlates with a set of constructs (Sacristán, 2013).

Six rounds of principal component estimation resulted in a resolved model from which four factors were extracted, as predicted. One item had to go because its loading was too low (0.4). As a group, they accounted for 57% of the total scoring variance after extraction. In this case, we measured a KMO of 0.749. The correlation matrix is highly factorable as evidenced by the significant result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 884.67$; $df = 153$; $p < .000$). Cronbach's alpha was used to analyze the level of reliability. Cronbach's alpha results showed satisfactory levels across the board: social commerce = 0.785, the new shopping environment = 0.672, online shopping = 0.767, and customer loyalty = 0.701. Both the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were thus established.

4. Results

To date, we have received 464 completed questionnaires from interested consumers. Most respondents were men (87%), but there were about 13% female participants. Two-thirds of participants fell between the ages of 26 and 35, and another third between the ages of 36 and 45, according to the demographic data. One-fifth of participants were older than 55 years old. Averaging out to about 25%, the four groups were fairly evenly distributed based on monthly income. Those with less than \$10,000 Saudi Riyal (SAR), between \$10,001 and \$15,000, between \$15,000 and \$20,000, and over \$20,000 were divided into four groups. About half of the participants had a bachelor's degree, while the rest had either no degree at all, a lower degree, or a postgraduate degree. The last major demographic inquiry concerned whether or not the respondent or a close relative had tested positive for COVID-19. More than half of those who were asked this gave a negative response.

We'll dig deeper into these findings below.

Financial Interactions in Social Networks

First, researchers looked at participants' social commerce behavior. Always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, and never were options for each of four questions.

The first statement read, "I tell my friends and family about what I buy or do on social media sites like Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter." Sixty percent or less of the people who shopped or participated activities shared with others and the rest kept to oneself. There was a significant gender difference in this behavior, with more female participants engaging in it than male.

Age also played a major role in how much people shared with others. The prevalence of sharing was found to rise with decreasing age, suggesting that younger participants were more likely to engage in this behavior. Participants' monthly income was also significantly related to this factor; those with lower incomes were more likely to report sharing their purchases and activities than those with higher incomes.

The second was, "I get recommendations on what to buy from friends and family." Seventy-plus percent plus of the group used this as part of their routine. Under-30s were more likely to engage than over-50s.

The third point was along the lines of "I tell others what I think about things I've bought or used." Greater than seventy-five percent of respondents discussed their experiences with the products they bought or used. Younger participants reported significantly more experience with reviewing and sharing with others than their older counterparts.

The fourth statement read, "I believe it is important for me and others to evaluate products and companies." Nearly ninety-five percent of those surveyed place a high degree of importance on giving and receiving feedback. No major distinctions could be made between the various demographic categories. A Revolutionary Mall

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked about any changes they'd made to the way they shopped in stores. Participants could select from five options (always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, or never) when answering each of the five questions. All items were made to see how they behave before, during, and after shopping. The first recommendation was to "Wash hands after shopping" using antiseptic liquid soap, alcohol-based hand gel, or both. Roughly ninety-nine percent of people did this, and half of them did it regularly. Nearly all participants said they followed social distance rules during service, with most saying they did so often or always. Nearly all participants engaged in the third practice, "Wearing disposable mask during shopping," with about two-thirds always doing so.

Although only a third of the participants consistently put into practice the fourth item, "Reducing the time of shopping by using planned shopping," most of the participants did this at least sometimes. Surprisingly, this behavior was engaged in by the elderly more frequently than any other age group. Only a third of participants always shopped alone without an at-risk family member, and a minority never did. This was done more frequently by consumers over 65 than by those under 35. Less women than men engaged in this behavior.

In the third section, we looked at how participants' levels of agreement with five items related to their online shopping habits. More than two-thirds agreed "Online shopping is easier." Consumers under the age of 35 were more likely to agree than those over the age of 35, which is a statistically significant difference. When it came to the second statement, "Online shopping is faster," roughly half of the participants agreed across the board. More than half of respondents agreed with the statement, "Online shopping enables me to get lower prices," while about a third were unsure. Female participants were significantly more likely to

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agree that they were able to save money by shopping online than male participants were. Participants differed significantly by age, with older people being less receptive to bargaining for lower prices.

About seventy-five percent of respondents agreed with the fourth statement, "Online shopping reduces health risks." While more men than women agreed that online shopping lowers health risks, women were more in agreement than men. Surprisingly, people who had either themselves or a family member diagnosed with COVID-19 were no different from people who hadn't been diagnosed with the virus. When asked about the fifth statement, "Online shopping gives me more options," roughly 67% of respondents said that they agreed. Agreeing on this matter varied significantly across age groups, with agreement falling off sharply for older participants. Brand Devotion

In the final section, we used four survey questions to probe respondents' loyalty. The first statement was, "The COVID-19 pandemic has given me the opportunity to try some new products," and more than 63% of respondents said they had done so. The differences between the various categories of people were negligible.

With regards to the second item, "There are some products that I first tried during COVID-19 and I still consume them," roughly half of the participants had tried new products for the first time during the pandemic and they still consume them today.

This is a crucial finding because it shows that roughly 75% of people who tried new products for the first time continue to use them regularly. Female participants were more likely to try new products and ultimately consume them than male participants.

Less than half of respondents agreed with the third statement, "Inappropriate behavior from some stores during COVID-19 forced me to leave them forever." For the fourth item, "Stores that neglected the precautionary measures during COVID-19 have been replaced or changed," more than half of respondents said that they agreed. The third and fourth items did not differ significantly between demographic groups. In the form of novel practices

The survey's fifth and final section inquired into whether or not respondents still followed their previous routines from the time of COVID-19. Six out of seven of the novel behaviors were still employed by about 40% of participants, albeit less frequently than during the COVID-19 epidemic. About a third of respondents report maintaining the same or higher levels of online shopping and family activities as their previous survey. Most people who stopped doing something regularly engaged in sports, while about a third never cooked at all. Just 4-8% of participants had these routines even before the pandemic, and they persisted even after the era of COVID-19.

Seventy-five percent of participants said they shopped online during or after the COVID-19 outbreak. Participants' online shopping habits ranked second-to-last among those they've either given up or never started. This highlights the significance of shopping online and suggests a strategy for businesses to adjust to a major consumer trend. Half of the women respondents reported doing as much or more online shopping after the pandemic than they had before. Approximately 34% of women said they still did some online shopping, though it was less frequently than before. While 65% of female participants reported no change in their online shopping habits, 35% of male participants reported doing the same or more.

Fewer than three quarters of people engaged in family activities. It's the third most common behavior that people have given up, but the least common that people have never done. About two-thirds of the participants maintained a healthy lifestyle, though this was less prevalent than during the COVID-19 period. About a quarter of the participants still spent more time in the kitchen and on self-improvement than they had in the past. In the wake of COVID-19, fewer people engaged in formerly common behaviors like participating in sports or reading for pleasure. The testing of hypotheses

Table 3 summarizes hypothesis-testing results. Some evidence was found in favor of hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4, whereas H5 was completely disproved. Gender had an important role in social commerce, the emergence of the modern shopping mall, the rise of internet shopping, and the persistence of loyal customers. Age had a crucial role in the development of the new retail landscape, including social commerce and internet purchasing. Only when people shared their purchases and activities with one another did they see a large income.

The Final Thoughts and Discussions

Following COVID-19, this study investigated how consumers behaved. As the results show, consumer behavior has shifted since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic. About two-thirds (65%) of consumers, particularly those who are younger, female, or have lower incomes, engage in the practice of sharing goods and activities with friends and family. It's estimated that 75% of customers, particularly younger consumers, seek suggestions from others and post opinions of items and businesses they've used. This is very important due to the weight that online recommendations carry when making a final buying choice. This means that companies need to be active participants in their customers' live comments and evaluations on social media and have an established strategy for doing so.

The measures shoppers are taking to protect themselves, such as washing their hands often, donning face masks, and keeping their distance from others, demonstrate a heightened awareness of the quality of the retail environment. Planned purchases and going to stores without a companion are also less common, but are more common among the elderly. This might be because people believe it is ultimately up to them to ensure their own safety and continue with life as usual despite the threat. Providing adequate security

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for customers shopping at physical locations is a responsibility that all businesses must shoulder. Businesses may help customers who feel unsafe shopping in shops by giving them the option to pre-order goods or have them delivered to their homes.

While the majority of respondents (65%) agree that buying online is simpler than traditional methods, the majority of younger customers (85%) disagree. This may be because online shoppers wait longer for their purchases than in stores. Companies must convince customers that they will profit from making online purchases by providing them with incentives like special discounts or access to limited-time offers. Five-plus-one-third of the sample agreed that they save money by doing most of their shopping online. Female and younger customers were more likely to have this view than male and older consumers. Because men and the elderly play such a significant role in shaping household spending habits, businesses would do well to offer them incentives in the form of online discounts. In general, companies could improve the online shopping experience by shortening the time it takes for orders to be sent and offering discounts to customers. Any new marketing strategy in the post-COVID-19 consumer environment must account for the shift toward a healthier lifestyle and emphasis on quality time spent with loved ones.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, over 65% of buyers tried new products for a variety of reasons. Half of consumers still used products they had tried for the first time during COVID-19, an important finding. Shoppers also stopped frequenting establishments that failed to take adequate safety measures during the pandemic. It's crucial that people know about these results. Because trying a new product can make customers wary of returning to their long-time favorite, it's important for businesses to have their wares readily available (online or in stores) whenever customers have a need. In addition, enterprises have to demonstrate to customers that they can shop with complete peace of mind. Customers are more willing to try new products after the pandemic, making this a crucial time for startups and small businesses. Nearly a third (35%) of COVID-19 attendees still engage in the majority (85%) of their newly formed habits. In the aftermath of the pandemic, consumers adopted novel behaviors to increase personal satisfaction, security, and social interaction. This is a significant finding that should be incorporated into advertising strategies.

Like all studies, this one has flaws. For instance, the consumers included in the sample were all Saudis, so the results may not apply to other buyers. The findings of this study can be established and confirmed by subsequent studies. In light of the fact that the world is rapidly becoming a global village, it is recommended that future research be conducted on a larger scale, including other countries, to gain a more complete picture of post-COVID-19 consumer behavior.

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