

Consumer Behaviour Towards Online Shopping: Study During Covid-19 Pandemic

Abstract: The Covid-19 Pandemic has brought a paradigm shift in the buying behaviour of the consumers. It is responsible for breaking the stereotype in the market trend. This paper tries to understand the change in consumer buying behaviour during lockdown caused due to Covid-19 pandemic. The traditional offline shopping habits of the consumers was replaced by online shopping. Also, the purchasing preference of consumers was clustered towards the essential items like, grocery, green grocery, toiletries and medicines. All other items were considered as secondary importance. It was also seen that the usual attraction of consumers with reference to promotional offers and discounts on products did not affect their buying behaviour. The results of the study reveals that consumers preferred buying essential items mostly through online mode of shopping.

Keywords: Covid-19, Consumer Goods, Consumer Behaviour, Online Shopping, Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The world was hit by novel coronavirus in March 2020, which resulted in a global crisis (Dr. Chandan Thakur, et.al. 2020). The infection was spreading very fast and to control the spread of the disease, government declared a lockdown all across the country. Due to lockdown, people had to stay at home and also had to follow social distancing norms whenever they go out. Complete lockdown was announced in India from 23rd March, 2020 onwards and hence most of the business, trade and industries were completely shut down (Gaurav Shetty, et.al. 2020). During this lockdown situation, people were following work from home pattern. Consumers hence did not have the flexibility of buying things whenever and wherever they need. This brought a change in the consumer buying behaviour to a large extent. Lack of vaccine and changing norms forced the people to prefer buying online rather than waiting in long queues at the supermarket and risking their lives. However, to sustain in this crisis situation, consumers started to buy what they need and started storing them in bulk due to panic. Panic buying is an act of holding necessary goods in bulk quantities, so as

to avoid any deficiency in future. Panic buying behaviour of customers as a response to the stress caused during crisis, Shadiqi et al., (2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic was continuing, consumers witnessed this as an alarming situation and panic buying emerged as a quite obvious phenomenon. Though E-commerce had gained impetus even before Covid-19 hit, the pandemic pushed it even more by accelerating online revenue (digital commerce 360).

This study takes a look into the changing consumer behaviour during the lockdown period. It also gives an insight into the type of goods that the consumers ordered and the increase in online shopping due to the impact of Covid-19. The results of the study are discussed based on the evaluation of the changes in consumer behaviour due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW COVID 19

The consequences of pandemic Covid-19 had an impact on the health as well as the economy of the country. Due to lockdown situation, self-isolation, home quarantine, social distancing, and strict use of masks was followed due to the contagious nature of the disease. COVID-19 has a nationwide impact especially on the business (Gaurav Shetty et al. 2018).

Online Buying

Due to Covid -19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, online shopping has become convenient, safe and attractive (Ali, Bayad, 2020). A study contributed to understand the trends and impact of covid-19 on consumers right from baby boomers to the X and Y generations especially related to online shopping behaviour (Ludvík Eger, et. Al, 2021). According to a research in Italy, online shopping was the best option during the epidemic as it helped the customers to buy necessary products, and also prevented them from the risk from spreading of disease. (Forster & Tang, 2005)

Consumer Behaviour towards online shopping during covid-19

According to a blog on impact of covid-19 on consumer behaviour, impact on shopping behaviour raged up in early March. This impact eventually declined, as the supply chain improved, and panic buying decreased. According to Numerator Insights data (2021), shoppers mostly placed online orders.

The overall level of consumer concern related to Coronavirus reached its highest levels in late March 2020. Some consumers mentioned that baking, cooking and consuming food & drinks at home more frequently than they did pre-COVID.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the change in consumer buying behaviour, from Offline to Online, during lockdown caused due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- To identify the most common purchased goods bought during Covid-19 lockdown.
- To analyse the impact of discount and promotional offers on the consumer buying behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research: A descriptive research was used to study the consumer buying behaviour which had included surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds.

Data collection-

The primary data is collected through the random survey based on a specially carved questionnaire filled by the local respondents of Pune Municipal Corporation, to understand their buying behaviour during lockdown. A Stratified Random Sampling method was used for data collection.

Secondary data-

was collected from published and unpublished literature on consumer behaviour.

Also the latest references available from the journals, newspapers, research publications and magazines, past records and other relevant sources available online.

Questionnaire – Design and implementation: It was done with the aid of experts in statistical techniques and taking into account the measurement needs & objectives of the study. The questionnaire was administered to the sample population and sample size.

Sampling Techniques: To conduct this study different respondent was selected from various age

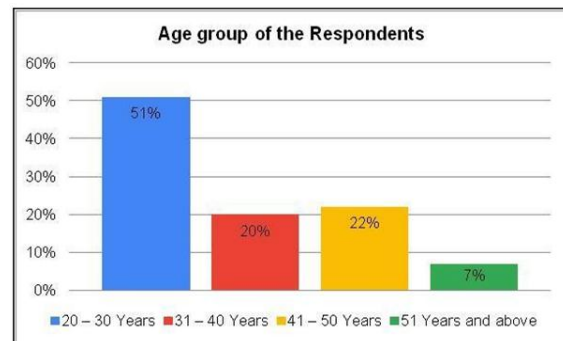
groups and geographical location of Pune city; this involved a minimum requirement of 100 samples, to achieve the minimum requirement a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed and 100 were received in return.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The data collected was analyzed using basic and advanced analytical tools. The data analysis was conducted with the purpose of attaining the set objectives. Mentioned below is the analysis which is

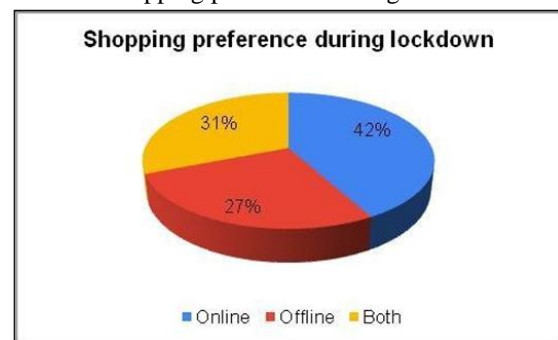
presented graphically and intabulated form for better interpretation. The interpretation of the collected data was done by drawing inferences from the collected facts after the analysis of the study.

Chart 1: Age Group of the Respondents



Observation: According to the above chart, it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 51% were found to be from the age group of 20 – 30 years, 20% were between 31 – 40 age group, 22% were belonging to the age group of 41 – 50 years and 7% were belonging to the age group of 51 years and above.

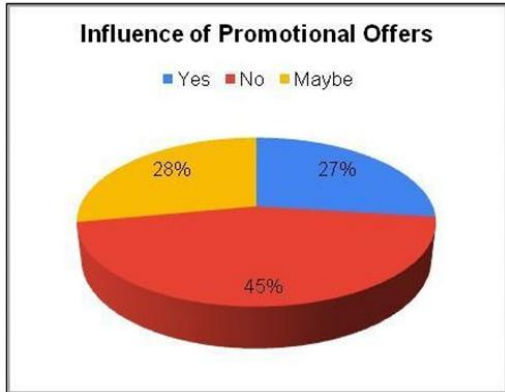
Chart 2: Shopping preference during lockdown.



Observation: According to the above chart it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 42% were found to be purchasing through the online mode, 27

% of the respondents were found to be using the traditional offline mode of shopping and 31% were preferring both the options of buying goods.

Chart3: Influence of Promotional offers on consumer buying



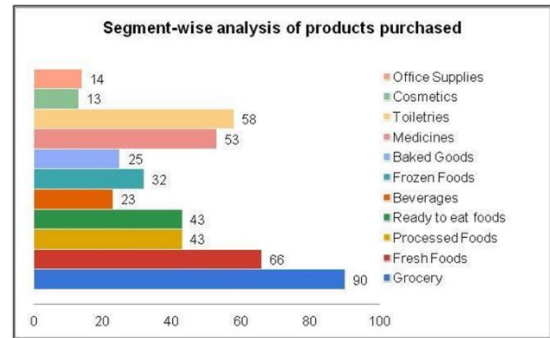
Observation: According to the above chart it can be stated that 27% of the respondents do believe that there was an influence of promotional offers on consumer buying behaviour, 45% of the respondents were denying the fact whereas 28% of the respondents were not sure about the fact.

Chart4: Influence of Discounts offered by online sites



Observation: According to the above chart it can be stated that majority of the respondents i.e. 57% were found to be of an opinion that the discounts that are offered by the online sites did not have any influence on their buying behaviour, 27% of the respondents were agreeing the fact, whereas 16% of the respondents were not sure about their response.

Chart5: Segment-wise analysis of products that was purchased during the lockdown



Inference: According to the above chart it can be stated that Groceries i.e. 90% were found to be mostly purchased during the pandemic as it is the basic necessity, followed by 66% fresh foods (Fresh fruits and vegetables) as it a basic daily requirement, 43% of the purchases were made towards Processed and Ready to eat foods for e.g. Noodles, Pastas, Chips, Biscuits, any packed snack etc.), 23% of the buying happened for different types of beverages, 32% of the selling happened of frozen foods like Meat products, snacks, ice cream etc., 25% of the baked goods e.g. items that are available in the bakeries were bought by the consumers, 53% of the respondents had purchased medicines, 58% purchasing happened towards the Toiletries for e.g. Cleaning agents, toothpaste, soaps, sanitizer etc., whereas the purchase of Cosmetics was 13% and office supplies i.e. 14% were found to be sold the least during lockdown.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 Pandemic has drastically bought a shift in the consumer buying behaviour. Due to the many restrictions laid down by the government with respect to market timings, availability of goods as per necessity and social distancing norms; the consumers have shifted their buying behaviour. These regulations of the government made a large number of consumers shift to the online mode of shopping than the traditional offline shopping mode. It was also preferred due to ease in buying, convenience and also from a safety perspective. The promotional offers could not create a urge for an increased buying trend among the consumers as no significant difference on the consumer buying behavior approach was observed as per the analysis. Similarly the discounts that were offered by the sellers did not make any influence upon the consumer buying behavior. Products like; Groceries, Fresh Foods, Medicines and Toiletries were found to be sold the

most during the pandemic because these were the basic necessities during the difficult time. On the other hand, Processed, Frozen and Ready to eat foods were found to be purchased moderately comparatively during the pandemic. Goods like Bakery products, Beverages, Cosmetics and Office supplies were found to be less purchased by consumers.

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