An Empirical Study on Consumers Buying Pattern during COVID-19 the Crucial Situation of Bhopal City

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Abstract

Online shopping in India has become the most dynamic business and has shown rapid growth in the past years. India has the greatest opportunity in online business to earn more profits and to contribute to the economy. During the last few years investment in online business has also increased very much whether it is online shopping site or online education basically in this covid-19 pandemic and even online business is mostly rising all over the world but they are most focused in the Indian market as compared to other countries in the world. The COVID- 19 pandemic and the lockdown and social distancing mandates have disrupted the consumer habits of buying as well as shopping. Consumers are trying to learn and improvise new habits. The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown have disrupted the consumer habits of consumer buying as well as shopping. Consumers are learning to improvise and learn new habits. Due to the need for a variety of respondents who have had previous experience with online shopping, a convinced sampling technique was chosen. The study has been undertaken concerning a sample size of 102 respondents. After collection of the data, the data was classified, tabulated, and coded. Necessary statistical tools such as Frequency, Percentage Analysis, and correlation have been used to interpret the data and reliability has been also checked. The results of this study may be of great use to Academics, Businesses & Managerial functions to explore new methods to understand consumer behaviour.

Keywords: COVID-19, Safety, Convenience, Digital Payment, Pandemic, Consumer behaviour.

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Introduction

At present time, every country is facing a pandemic situation and during the starting phase of the pandemic, everyone went under lockdown to sustain human lives. Here in this Research, our study is focused to understand consumer behavior during the critical situation. By keeping in mind we will study the change in consumer behavior how much it changed during this critical time and this study to be made through online mode to understand the purchase behavior for commodities during covid-19. In our study, the description for pandemic before covid-19 are given extracted from various sources and information about online shopping, and the most important thing which is consumer behaviour is also given. Consumer behaviour studies how individual consumers, groups, or organizations select, buy, use goods, and services to satisfy their needs and wants. It identifies the actions of the consumers in the marketplace and the underlying motives for those actions. Marketers do vast analysis to understand what causes the consumers to buy particular goods and services, they will be able to determine - which products are needed in the marketplace, which is obsolete, and how best to present the goods to the consumers. During this pandemic situation, it is noticed that the consumer preference has changed so much and necessity products are more preferred during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Rationale of the study

Outbreak of epidemic and consequent lockdown has changed the marketing and shopping scenario all over the world. Now the people very much rely on online marketing as during lockdown physical stores are closed and consumers are unable to visit it physically. Lockdown has largely affected the consumer purchase pattern. Social distancing and Covid Prevention measures have completely disrupted the supply chain scenario & it will take time to recover the situation. Beside it easy access to the information and development of technology has changed the understanding of consumer which forces to change the strategies of marketers worldwide.

Aim & Objective of the study

1. Primary Objective

➢ To understand the purchasing pattern of the consumer during covid-19 for various Commodities necessity, comfort, and luxury products.

2. Secondary Objective

➢ Individual focus on different products.
➢ Individual focus on entertainment goods (The disposable income is invested

in other purchases and preferences.)
➤ Individual preference on online shopping during covid-19.

Literature review

Post covid transition there is increase in trend of online marketing and transaction however there are certain risks associated with online transaction identified by different researchers. Among all financial risk is one of the important risk associated with consumers which include Financial loss of consumer due to the defect products and extra expenses post purchase and possibility of online fraud by hackers to steal credit card information [Forsyth and Shi 2005]. As per the privacy concern online consumers need privacy of their information even if they ready to pay premium price(Xie et al. 2011) some time consumer fear to control loss of their personal information as they may be used without your knowledge and consent (Miyazaki & Fernandez,2021) Introduction of android mobile and internet facility has also promoted the online marketing and online transactions (Pandey et al. 2022). Now consumers are comparatively more informed and they are aware about the different aspects of online marketing trends and online trends. Government policies and change in the banking scenario towards security in online transactions has stimulated the marketing trends of consumers towards online marketing.

Beside all risks associated with online transaction post covid transition has changed the consumer trends and behavior towards the online services as it reduces the risk of physical contact and transmission of different variant of COVID virus (Sheth,2020) people are very much health conscious today. Another important benefit consumer experienced is saving of time as digital transactions don't need to visit stores physically.

Research Methodology

The research regarding "An empirical study on Consumer buying pattern during COVID-19 situation Bhopal city" quantitative as well as survey research to understand the relation between the factors that affect the consumer buying pattern and their behaviour toward various products during these crucial times. There are two types of research methods are being used quantitative and qualitative. We would like to go for the quantitative method in our research as it is a precise way. Quantitative research can be faster as compared to qualitative as it is possible to forecast the schedule, whereas qualitative can be relatively long in duration. Research normally done for academic reasons are limited to time as our research is also being done for academic purpose but it can also be used for business purpose and this research is time-limited so that is why we are going to prefer quantitative approach. All the data is based on the numerical figures obtained in

the survey.

The questions were self-administered, intending to obtain maximum information from the respondent that is why the questions were straightforward and made based on 5 points Likert scale. The data collected was collected in the survey through online mode which is numerical, so the type of analysis was statistical.

The sample size of the research is 102 and the tools used to do the analysis are frequency analysis, percentage and correlation, and charts to analyze the study and to find the results from the study.

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Research Question and Hypothesis

RQ: Do the consumer buying pattern changed during covid-19?

H0: The buying pattern of the consumer didn't affect by the covid-19.

H1: The buying pattern of consumers affected by covid-19 and changed very much with several similarities.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting the response from the consumers, the data is systematically tabulated for analysis purposes. Frequency analysis is done to know the frequency of consumers based on demography, in this table, the frequency and percentage of gender are calculated based on response collected and the frequency and percentage of age are also calculated. The reliability of data is tested from SPSS software and reliability tool and correlation is done for additional findings from the data collected from the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample (N=102)

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	56	55.76
	Female	38	42.3
Age	15-19	14	13.42
	20-25	65	63.72
	26-30	10	9.8
	31-35	9	8.82
	35 or more	4	3.92

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Here is the calculations are made to find out the frequency of the population who are opting to use the different mode for purchasing the during the Covid 19. Lockdown and the percentage out of that frequency and also the frequency of consumers who are from different age category and the percentage of age varying from various segments. (Table 1).

Reliability of the data

Reliability of data is extracted through putting the response in SPSS and analyzing by putting it in the reliability equation and data needs to be around (.700) to be reliable and here the data is (.678) which is around to reliable. As to find out the research answer we are searching so In (table 2) case processing summary is given and in (table 3) reliability test has been done and interpretation

is done, so we can say that it is reliable data **(Table 2 & Table 3). (N=102)**

Table 2: case processing summary

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	102	99.0
	Excluded	1	1.0
	Total	103	100.0
a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics of the data

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.678	15

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Correlation tables

Here the correlation is to be found out from the study to check the relevance of the study by testing null hypothesis and an alternate hypothesis and finding the results and interpreting them with the help of calculating the response taken from the respondents through online mode.

Correlations		Preference 1	Preference 2	Preference 3	Preference 4
Preference 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.180	.185	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.070	.062	.141
	N	102	102	102	102
Preference 2	Pearson Correlation	.180	1	.195*	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.070		.050	.571

		102	102	102	102
Preference 3	Pearson Correlation	.185	.195*	1	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.050		.001
	N	102	102	102	102
Preference 4	Pearson Correlation	.147	.057	.323**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.141	.571	.001	
	N	102	102	102	102

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Here in this table (table 4) calculations were done it is the fund that there is a positive correlation between preference and other and here we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. H can be seen that the Pearson correlation coefficient, r, is 0.180 which is statistically significant ($p = 0.005$).

Table 5: Frequency of purchase by the consumer with other aspects

Correlations					
		Frequency 1	Frequency 2	Frequency 3	Frequency 4
Frequency 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.107	.080	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.282	.422	.000
	N	102	102	102	102
Frequency 2	Pearson Correlation	.107	1	.257**	.042
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.282		.009	.673
	N	102	102	102	102
Frequency 3	Pearson Correlation	.080	.257**	1	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.422	.009		.839

		102	102	102	102
Frequency 4	Pearson Correlati on	.502**	.042	.020	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.673	.839	
	N	102	102	102	102
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Researcher's calculations.

In the above table (table 5) test were done it is found that here also there is a positive relationship between values and significance values are more than p values and here again we reject the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that consumer purchase frequency changes due to change in price, change in situations, etc

Table 6: safety aspects of the consumers

Correlations		Safety 1	Safety 2	Safety 3	Safety 4
Safety 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.120	.158	-.215*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.228	.114	.030
	N	102	102	102	102
Safety 2	Pearson Correlation	.120	1	.344**	.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228		.000	.162
	N	102	102	102	102
Safety 3	Pearson Correlation	.158	.344**	1	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.000		.010
	N	102	102	102	102
Safety 4	Pearson Correlation	-.215*	.139	.255**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.162	.010	
	N	102	102	102	102
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Here in this correlation table (table 6) the significance value is more than 0.05

which shows a positive relationship between the variables and the null hypothesis is again rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. In the next row, the correlation is tested and again there is a positive relationship and the significance value is more so again here null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted as it is proved to be right.

Table 7: Flexibility of the consumer for the purchase

| Correlations		Flexibility1	Flexibility 2	Flexibility 3
Flexibility1	Pearson Correlation	1	.191	-.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.054	.805
	N	102	102	102
Flexibility 2	Pearson Correlation	.191	1	.353**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054		.000
	N	102	102	102
Flexibility 3	Pearson Correlation	-.025	.353**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.805	.000	
	N	102	102	102
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Researcher's calculations.

Here in (**Table 7**), the significance value is .000 which proves that the null hypothesis is rejected, and we again choose the alternative hypothesis as it shows a positive relationship between the variables.

So, from the following observations, we can find that there is a positive relationship between the changes in consumer behavior due to covid-19 with various similarities. As data is also not much huge but it shows a result which we can rely on to do our findings.

Ratings are given by consumers for 5 shopping sites (Amazon, Myntra, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Ajio). Pictorial representation is given in (Figure 3) and the following average ratings are given below in (Table 8).

Rate these shopping sites.
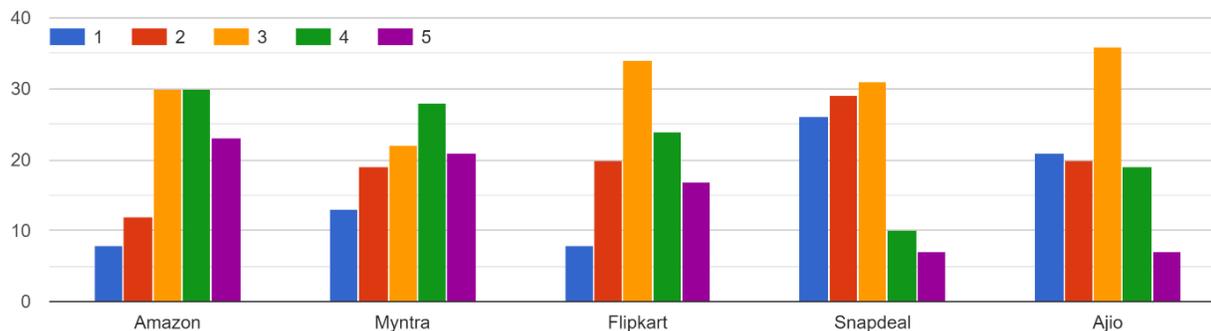
Source: Researcher's calculations from the questionnaire

Table 8: online shopping sites and average ratings

Shopping sites	Average ratings
Amazon	3.450980392
Myntra	3.264705882
Flipkart	3.18627451
Snapdeal	2.450980392
Ajio	2.725490196

Source: Researcher's calculations.

In the above **(figure 3)** the is the graph are shopping sites where respondents have given the responsibility for the question as they have rated the different shopping sites from 1 to 5 as according to their choice and in next table no. 8 the data shown is the average ratings for each shopping site where Amazon is highest with 3.45 average rating and Snapdeal is least rated with 2.45 points.

Findings of the study
- Brand preference for purchasing the product is important for most of the consumers as various consumers prefer to have products that are branded.
- The price factor is also an important factor for consumers of different income groups as they prefer to purchase the product according to their

income level.

- During covid-19 most of the consumers preferred to have necessity goods over comfort goods and luxury goods.

- Consumer prefers to purchase more from the trustworthy website which provides them safe payment gateways during the purchase process.

- Consumers preferred more to purchase from Amazon than they prefer to purchase from Myntra after that they prefer to purchase from Flipkart and the least 2 are Snapdeal and Ajio.

- Online purchasing proved to be safer during this crucial situation.

- Consumers are more aware of market trends.

- Problematic situations are much responsible for a change in consumer behaviour.

Scope of the study

The research findings presented in this report can provide an in-design understanding of the variables that affect the changes in consumer behaviour during difficult times how they react to the situation and the selection of purchasing mode during the pandemic in Bhopal city of Madhya Pradesh. Besides, a direction for future research is to conduct similar studies on other cities of Madhya Pradesh and compare consumer behaviour and compare consumer behaviour towards online purchases. Another possible direction is to compare the dynamicity of Indian consumer behaviour towards online purchasing. The scope of the study is not only limited to consumers of Bhopal but it is this type of research that can be further done across the region of Madhya Pradesh and in broader, it can be done all over India and further, it can be extended to understand the behaviour of the global consumer.

Limitation of the study

- Taking an interview with respondents was quite a difficult job.
- The study of consumer buying behavior during online mode is quite a difficult job.
- Some people refused to give a response. Most of the people were asking for money to fill the response. Some people were found biased toward the online mode of purchase and some People were biased toward the offline mode even after the covid-19 pandemic.
- Lack of interaction with respondents due to online surveys.
- Some of the consumers were found biased toward various shopping sites.
- Lockdown was the limitation as it restricted to move out of the house to take an interview from respondents.

Conclusion

Consumer buying behaviour is dependent on various factors that push them to act accordingly, as today's consumers are more aware of everything and they are more knowledgeable about the product so marketers also use the strategies which attract the consumer to make purchase action. There are a lot of factors that make the consumer change the behaviour towards the product and from time to time taste and preferences also change. As Indian consumer is so dynamic, so a lot of efforts are made to understand the Indian consumer behaviour and Indian market. This project helps to identify the relationship how various factors affect the buying behaviour of the consumer even during the pandemic situation what are the aspects that affected consumer buying behaviour, for which a total of 102 responses was gathered with 4 variables and 16 statements which helped understand the question. The responses were given by people of various age groups and most of the respondents were youngsters aged between 20-25 which shows how most of the consumers are youngsters.

In conclusion, this study will help the marketers to understand the behavioural aspects of the consumers and to make various strategies. It is also found that consumers who shop online do feel safe during purchase, even in this pandemic consumer-preferred more of online mode to purchase their products, but on other hand various consumers to consider various factors like preference based on brand, price of the product, payment methods like online payment or cash on delivery of the product during purchases, and keeping in mind online retailers also provide various offers and coupons to consumers to purchase more, they provide products which are very essential to everyone as well as products which are of comfort and are so much luxurious which makes consumers attract more towards online purchases.

this article.

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