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# “A Study On Impact Of Covid-19 On Online Buyer's Purchase Preferences”

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on various aspects of our lives, including the way we shop and make purchasing decisions. As people adapted to lockdowns, social distancing measures, and a general sense of uncertainty, online shopping emerged as a crucial lifeline for many consumers. In this response, we will delve deeper into the impact of COVID-19 on online buyers' purchase preferences, exploring key trends and changes that have shaped the e-commerce landscape.

### 1. Shift to Online Shopping

One of the most notable effects of the pandemic has been the accelerated shift towards online shopping. With physical stores closing temporarily or operating with restrictions, consumers turned to e-commerce platforms as their primary mode of purchasing goods. This shift was not limited to specific product categories; it affected a wide range of industries, from essential items like groceries and cleaning supplies to non-essential goods like clothing, electronics, and home decor. This increased reliance on online shopping has led to a surge in demand for e-commerce platforms, logistics services, and digital payment solutions. Companies that already had a strong online presence were well-positioned to capitalize on this trend, while traditional brick-and-mortar retailers had to quickly adapt their operations to meet the growing demand for online shopping.

### 2. Safety and Hygiene Concerns

The pandemic brought about heightened concerns regarding personal safety and hygiene. As a result, online buyers developed a strong preference for contactless shopping experiences. They sought out retailers that prioritized safety measures, such as proper sanitization, mask requirements, and social distancing protocols. This led to an increased demand for services like home delivery, curbside pickup, and contactless payment options.

Retailers and e-commerce platforms responded by implementing stringent health and safety protocols, providing clear communication about their practices, and investing in

technologies that facilitated contactless transactions. This not only reassured consumers but also became a crucial factor influencing their purchase decisions.

### **3. Essential and Health-Related Products**

During the pandemic, there was a significant surge in demand for essential items, including groceries, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), and healthcare products. Consumers prioritized purchasing these items online, often through dedicated online marketplaces or direct-to-consumer channels. This surge in demand posed several challenges, such as supply chain disruptions, inventory shortages, and delivery delays.

To meet the increased demand, e-commerce platforms and retailers had to quickly adapt their operations. They implemented measures to ensure the availability of essential products, optimized logistics and delivery processes, and expanded their partnerships with suppliers. Moreover, many platforms introduced specific shopping windows or priority access for vulnerable populations, ensuring that essential items were accessible to those who needed them the most.

### **4. Home and Office Equipment**

As remote work and online education became the norm, online buyers showed a growing interest in purchasing home office equipment. Laptops, webcams, ergonomic furniture, and other accessories became essential items for individuals setting up their home workstations. Similarly, there was an increased demand for home fitness equipment, as people sought ways to stay active while gyms and fitness centers were closed.

This surge in demand led to supply chain challenges, product shortages, and increased competition among retailers. Some retailers responded by diversifying their product offerings, partnering with manufacturers, or implementing pre-order systems to manage customer expectations. As a result, online buyers had to navigate availability issues and make purchasing decisions based on factors like price, brand reputation, and estimated delivery times.

### **5. DIY and Home Improvement**

With more time spent at home, online buyers developed an interest in do-it-yourself (DIY) projects and home improvement. This led to increased purchases of tools, gardening supplies, home decor, and renovation materials through online platforms. Home improvement and craft tutorials gained popularity, and social media platforms became hubs for sharing ideas, inspiration, and project updates.

E-commerce platforms and retailers catering to the DIY and home improvement niche experienced a surge in demand. They responded by curating product recommendations,

enhancing product descriptions and visuals, and offering online tutorials or guides. This not only catered to the growing interest in DIY projects but also helped buyers make informed decisions by providing relevant information and recommendations.

## 6. Digital Services and Subscriptions

Another significant shift in online buyers' preferences during the pandemic was an increased focus on digital services and subscriptions. Streaming services, online learning platforms, digital entertainment (e-books, music, and movies), and telecommunication services experienced a surge in demand as people sought ways to stay entertained, educated, and connected while spending more time at home.

As a result, companies providing these digital services experienced significant growth. Streaming platforms released new content, online learning platforms expanded their course offerings, and telecommunication companies adapted their plans to accommodate increased data consumption. Online buyers increasingly considered factors such as content libraries, user interfaces, pricing plans, and customer support when selecting digital service providers.

## 7. Focus on Health and Wellness

The pandemic prompted individuals to prioritize their health and well-being. Online buyers showed an increased interest in health-related products, including vitamins, supplements, fitness equipment, and personal care items. They sought out products that supported physical and mental well-being, both as a preventive measure and for self-care purposes.

E-commerce platforms and retailers catering to the health and wellness niche saw a surge in demand. They responded by enhancing product descriptions, providing detailed information about ingredients or certifications, and highlighting the benefits of their products. Many companies also invested in content marketing strategies to educate consumers about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic.

## 8. Price and Value Considerations

The economic impact of the pandemic made many online buyers more price-conscious. With job losses, reduced income, and uncertain financial situations, consumers became more vigilant about their spending. They actively looked for deals, discounts, and value-added offers to make their purchases more affordable.

As a result, price comparison websites, coupon platforms, and loyalty programs gained popularity. Retailers had to adapt their pricing strategies, offer competitive prices, and communicate their value propositions effectively. Buyers increasingly relied on customer reviews, ratings, and product descriptions to assess the quality and value of a product before making a purchase decision.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced online buyers' purchase preferences. It accelerated the shift towards online shopping, prioritized safety and hygiene concerns, increased demand for essential items and health-related products, and sparked interest in home and office equipment, DIY projects, digital services, and health and wellness products. Price and value considerations also played a crucial role in purchase decisions during this time. These changes have reshaped the e-commerce landscape and have implications for businesses and retailers seeking to cater to the evolving needs and preferences of online buyers.

## **9. Expectations of consumers**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, almost retailers have modified their distribution of products or services, return schemes to provide maximum protection to their shoppers and employees. These improvements will alter consumer perceptions of online delivery and returns, as discussed by Global Data, a leading data and analytics firm. As per the Global Data report which provides businesses in the world's largest industries with unique data, expert insight and creative solutions. Longer returns period, change in methods of return of products, reasonable price of products, Contactless delivery are the main expectations of consumers from online shopping service providers for getting more satisfaction.

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