### Purchase Decision-Making during the Covid Pandemic 19: The Character of International Consumer Behavior

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is explaining the justification of the phenomenon of consumer behavior is a quite new scientific discipline that emerged only in the middle of the last century, has always been a challenge for companies, especially in the period of the Covid 19 pandemic, where the unpredictable situation affects consumer behavior. The research methods in this paper are the interaction of several scientific methods such is a historical method that took data from the professional literature in the field of marketing, which analyzed the factors and processes of consumer behavior by using the quantitative statistical method with a deductive approach. It has been proven that business results mostly bought products in stores to which they are "loyal" regardless of brand and origin, while a smaller part started buying exclusively products of SEE companies. The analysis concluded that R Square .511 showed that online shopping depends on fear of consumers for possible appeals the same tested model showed that consumers are careful to buy their products because they are not able to physically intoxicate purchased products on the Internet. Also, research results show that companies in the SEE that consumer behavior is a very important indicator for organizational behavior experts on how and in what way to choose the right marketing strategy.

Key-Words: - Customer, Behavior, decision making covid-19 pandemic

Received: July 20, 2021. Revised: February 23, 2022. Accepted: March 9, 2022. Published: March 24, 2022.

### 1 Introduction

The study and analysis of consumer behavior is a quite new scientific discipline that emerged only in the middle of the last century, and tries to answer the "why" question. It is well known that since production and sales would not exist without the buyer, i.e., the consumer who will buy the product or service, the behavior of these same consumers before purchase, during purchase and after purchase has become a very interesting area for many theorists. Studying their behavior, we come to the conclusion that the goal of every company is actually to meet the needs and desires of consumers, because this way only could be reached a regular customer who will faithfully return to a particular brand, and thus the company will profit and benefit economically. Nowadays, the consumer enormous power because he has access to an enormous amount of information about price, bidders, design, payment options, delivery, etc., and providers are left with the "burden" of offering a product or service that is better than others and that the consumer will recognize as such.

The year 2020 respectively, 2021 is specific in many ways, including the tough times in economy due to coronavirus pandemic. At the very beginning of 2020, news came from China about a new virus

that has passed from animal to human and is spreading very fast. Shortly after the first news about distant China, the epidemic started in Italy and at the end of the second month in the Republic of Kosovo. With each new infection, the measures were tightened, and in mid-March, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic and the Republic of Kosovo jointly with the rest European countries and wide were completely banned from work, movement and public gatherings. Many were forced to work from home, moving between cities and countries was possible only with passes for which they had to have a good reason to get from the local Civil Protection Headquarters, all contacts of infected or persons coming from abroad were mandatory directed to 14 days in quarantine, and though numerous shops and factories were closed. A large number of people in various occupations were fired. These measures lasted for approximately two

However, the subject of this paper is to explain in more detail the behavior of consumers and the factors and processes that affect the consumer leading to their decision to buy and / or purchase. The research seeks to determine whether consumers in the Republic of Kosovo have changed their consumer and shopping habits during the

coronavirus pandemic, i.e., during the quarantine period in which there was widespread panic and fear.

Hence, the main goal of this paper is to investigate and analyze which factors and processes affect consumers and determine the impact of quarantine on consumers, as well as to analyze their behavior and their awareness of buying actions. It also seeks to investigate and determine how and which products consumers bought during the quarantine time, i.e., during the ban on work, movement and public gatherings, whether they were only necessary groceries or bought, more than usual, electronics and furniture and whether they turned to buying domestic products and whether they saved more than before in view of the impending economic and economic crisis.

# 2 Problem Formulation: The purchase decision-making process in emergency situations

One of the most important areas in studying consumer behavior is making a purchase decision. For a buying decision making process to occur, there must be more than one alternative so that the consumer can decide what to buy. Kesic argues that the consumer uses decision-making rules of his choice and uses information from his own memory to decide on a better alternative. The process of making a purchase decision is analyzed in the following stages [1].

- knowledge of the problem;
- requesting information;
- evaluation of information;
- purchase decision and
- post-purchase processes.

Fulfillment of a need arises when the consumer sees the difference between the actual situation and the desired state. The greater this difference, the need arises more. Research methods such as surveys, focus groups, expert groups, etc., are used to measure the presence and degree of consumer problems, and techniques such as activity analysis, product analysis, problem analysis, human factor research and emotional research, which are used to identify problems. Activity analysis and product analysis are very similar, i.e., activity analysis is based on the analysis of focus group opinions on problems that occur in certain activities, product analysis refers to the process of buying and using products. Problem analysis begins with a list of

problems and asks consumers which products and brands they associate with these problems. Research of human factors refers to the determination of human capabilities in the field of vision, fatigue, imagination and the influence of external stimuli. Emotion research is conducted individually with the aim of understanding the emotions associated with a particular product [2].

After realizing the problem, there is a search for information about the product, price, store, etc. It can be viewed as a pre-purchase search that is related to purchasing decisions and constant search that is related to general consumer interest in a particular product category. Internal search involves the consumer's memory in which the consumer will look for any information, attitude or experience that could help solving the problem. Whilst, external search refers to the process of obtaining information from external sources after the consumer concludes the information stored in his own memory is External sources sufficient. are magazines, salespeople, newspapers, advertisements, etc. The most important characteristics for the volume of demand are: knowledge, inclusion, beliefs and attitudes, and demographic characteristics [3].

The third step is related to consumers adequate information prior to make a purchase decision. Information evaluation uses pre-established criteria as a basis for selection of information. Valuation criteria change over time, which means that the consumer can use different criteria for different products in different purchases. The most common criteria are prices, product brand, country of origin and key characteristics.

There are two approaches to produce the evaluation [4]

- 1. non-compensatory decision rule refers to the rule when one highly rated product feature cannot compensate for or replace other bad features and a purchasing decision will not be reached. It is also divided into the rule of separation, the rule of binding, the lexicographic rule and the sequential rule of elimination;
- 2. compensatory decision rule consumers allow the advantages of one product to compensate for the weaknesses of another feature. It is divided into consensus and evaluation of low-involvement situations.

Buying is the fourth phase of deciding on a purchase that comes after the customer has realized the problem, found the necessary information about the product he wants to buy and assessed the same information. Nonetheless, distinguish three purchase intentions, which are provided below [5]:

- 1. fully planned purchase the consumer knows exactly in advance which product to buy and which brand to buy and where exactly to buy it;
- 2. partially planned purchase the consumer knows which product he wants to buy, but chooses the brand in the store;
- 3. unplanned (impulsive) purchase both the product and the brand are chosen at the point of sale.

Kesic was states that most consumers buy impulsively because of the satisfaction that such a purchase creates, and additionally provides the features that affect such a purchase, such are: low price, low product volume, short shelf life and easy storage of products, while consumer behaviors factors stimulate such purchases shelf exposure, mass distribution, store location and products within the store, and methods of sales promotion at the point of sale. The last stage of purchasing decision-making is post-purchasing behavior where customers involve evaluating the purchasing decision [6].

Khan was proves that after purchasing and using the product, the consumer may be satisfied, indifferent or dissatisfied depending on the degree of fulfillment of expectations. However, there is no direct correlation with expectations in the process of achieving satisfaction.

Differences between expectations and the product obtained are called post-purchase dissonance. The respective difference determines how satisfied the person will be with the purchase she / he has made. If there is no difference between what is expected and what is received, then the customer will be satisfied with his purchase. Dissonance occurs when a customer buys, he should give up the attractive characteristics of alternatives that he did not choose. As the choice of purchase is constant and cannot be corrected, if the product or service purchased by the consumer is not satisfactory, the consumer's dissatisfaction and disappointment increase [7].

Consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction can result in several forms, namely positive confirmation when the product is better than expected, simple confirmation when the product is at the level of expected and negative confirmation when the product is worse than expected. Retaining existing customers is a higher priority than acquiring new ones, and the primary task of marketing professionals is to achieve and maintain consumer loyalty. Consumer loyalty is achieved through identification where the consumer believes that a particular brand becomes part of his image [8].

Kesic was claims that there are several benefits for marketing strategies that arise from post-purchase behavior, namely [7]:

- confirmation on consumer expectations;
- realistically and possible communication;
- stimulation of attitude changes and
- strengthen the shopping habits.

Furthermore, for the development of marketing strategy it is important to define the goals to be achieved, among other things, the goal of attracting new users, the goal of attracting competitors of competing products, encouraging existing customers to use even more products, encouraging current consumers to become loyal. customers and encouraging innovators to become repeat customers [9].

### 2.1 Relation between SARS-CoV-2 and International Consumer Behavior

The most significant changes are caused by the globalization of competition, quality management, restructuring economy, computerization of business and respect for suppliers as a partner. The globalization of competition is present in production and service ssector. The development of global competition is the result of rapid development in the international market. The expansion of business in the international market is the result of new political and legal solutions, related to create interesting economic communities, technological change demographic, cultural and other trends. With business expansion global competition is also

Success in a globalized competitive environment requires constant care for the quality of the product on offer. Product quality is not just a technical characteristic of a product, such as

emerging in the international market.

reliability or durability, but primarily the ability to meet the product and all other expectations of business customers that is achieved by the system quality management.

Adapting to new business conditions in the business market it is directly related to restructuring in the economy. Basically,

There are two trends, the first, which is related to the emergence of many small and medium-sized businesses in the market and the second, which relates to unification of interest related business entities. Strengthening through

the amalgamation of interest-related business entities is realized by forming strategic alliances, acquisitions and mergers. Business informatization is revolutionizing the entire business, both in sales and procurement. Listed primarily thanks internet, personal computer development and computer programs. A number of computer programs have been developed for slow and sales business that facilitate and speed up record keeping, communication inside and outside the business customer, making calculations, predicting business events and trends.

These and other changes in the business environment encourage literate customers to develop in collaboration with suppliers. Suppliers they are treated as partners and they are approached as business customers, ie. their strengths and weaknesses, preferences, segments and

selects from them several suppliers who become strategic suppliers or partners.

Sheth rightly points out that the purchasing process based on transactions and domestic sources of procurement is a thing of the past, and that relational relations and global sources of procurement are also at work. The new coronavirus that was discovered at the end of 2019 in China is called SARS-CoV-2. Coronaviruses are viruses that circulate among animals, but some can spread to humans and spread further among the population, as is the case with SARS-CoV-2 [10]. The disease caused by the coronavirus is called COVID-2019. The newly discovered coronavirus is genetically strongly related to the 2003 SARS virus and has similar characteristics.

Changes in the business environment encourage adjustment in the behavior of business customers.

### 3 Methodology

The research methods in this paper are the interaction of several scientific methods. Theoretical and empirical research was used. The theoretical research used a historical method that took data from the professional literature in the field of marketing, which analyzed the factors and processes of consumer behavior and provided divisions and definitions of key terms with respect to a given topic. Electronic databases with complete scientific texts and relevant internet sources such as the Civil Protection Headquarters and the Pristina Central Clinical Hospital were also used. In order to convey the collected information in a meaningful and correct way, the methods of analysis and synthesis and the method of description were used.

The empirical part of the research was conducted using a survey questionnaire: "Consumer behavior during the pandemic (quarantine) of COVID-19" that was distributed via internet online submission.

The survey questionnaire contains 18 questions and was conducted from July 25 to December 10, 2021, and 373 respondents participated in it. The questionnaire investigated how quarantine affected consumers in general, whether they changed their habits, whether they turned to online shopping more than usual, what products they bought and whether they started saving more than before due to the announced economic crisis. The results of the survey questionnaire confirmed or rejected the set hypotheses, for which methods of proving and refusing were used.

Based on the previously set goals and subjects of the paper, the following research hypotheses can be set, which will be confirmed or rejected by this research:

- H1 Consumers bought less than they did before.
- H2 Consumers used internet shopping more than before the pandemic because they were restricted in movement.
- H3 Consumers bought more domestic products than usual.
- H4 Consumers have turned to some form of savings for fear of an impending crisis.

#### **4 Problem Solution**

In this part is present a statistical analysis related to research category variables where they relate to the purchase of products (clothing, electronics, furniture, essential foods) over the Internet and fear of buying during a situation caused by the Covd 19 pandemic where phenomena such as hundred fear, savings, sufficiency of money, reduction purchased the main part of building a variable. The following table shows whether customers practiced internet shopping more than before, with 260 respondents answering negatively (69.7%), while 113 respondents answered positively or 30.3%.

Table 1. Internet shop

Variables / Questionary	Fi	% Fi
Respondents practiced Internet shopping more than before Covid 19	113	30,30%
Respondents do not practice Internet shopping more than before Covid 19	160	69,70%

The next question was not obligatory to answer, i.e., the offered answers referred to the previous question if the respondent answered "yes", so we have 159 respondents. Of these, 57.90% (92 respondents) most often bought clothes online during quarantine,

18% (29 respondents) bought electronics, 11% (17 respondents) furniture, 10.10% (16 respondents) necessary necessities, while 3.10% (5 respondents) chose the answer "other".

Table 2. The most frequently purchased products via the Internet

Variables / Questions	Fi	% Fi
Respondents during quarantine most often bought clothes online	92	57,90%
Respondents during quarantine most often bought electronics online	29	18%
Respondents during quarantine most often bought furniture online	17	11%
Respondents during quarantine most often bought the necessary groceries online	16	10,10%
Respondents during quarantine most often bought the rest via the Internet	5	3,10%

Given that we are threatened by the economic crisis, the following graph shows whether respondents reduced their purchases for fear of the same. Most respondents, 156 of them, are afraid of what will happen tomorrow and are saving more than before the pandemic, which is 41.80%. They are followed by respondents, 144 of them, who think they have enough money not to be afraid (38.60%) and finally 73 respondents, which is 19.6% who have not reduced their purchases and do not care.

Table 3. Fear of the coming crisis

Variables / Questionary	Fi	% Fi
The respondent's afraid of what tomorrow will be and I'm saving more than before	156	41,80%
Respondents have enough money not to be afraid	144	38,60%
Respondents did not reduce their purchases and did not care	73	19,60%

According to variables question: "Where do you save your money". Most respondents, 54.20% answered that they save at home. It is immediately followed by banks, 38%, while 3.2% use some kind of savings in insurance. While the rest respondents, 3.20% use savings in banks.

Table 4 shows in the range of 1 to 5 the claim that the pandemic is the right time to wake up and start

spending smarter and more realistically. The graph shows that 35.6%, or 132 respondents, rated the statement with 5 and agree with it. It was rated 4 by 95 respondents, which is 25.6%, and 110 of them checked third degree or 29.6%. The least number of respondents opted for grade 2 (4.9%) and grade 1 (4.3%).

Table 4. The pandemic is the right time to become aware and start spending "smarter" net

Note	Fi		% Fi
5	1	32	35,60%
4		95	25,60%
3	1	10	29,60%
2		2	4,90%
1		1	4,30%

The basic concept of study in this paper is consumer behavior. After the research and processed data, it was found that each respondent has a different attitude towards shopping during the pandemic and has different habits than other respondents. In the research we can see that women are the most frequent consumers, i.e., that women most often went shopping during the pandemic, and women aged 26-35, while men are drastically less. Despite all the recommendations and prohibitions, almost half of the respondents worked normally, without a single day of work from home. Most respondents, more than 80%, did not buy anything special from items, but the same items, and the same quantity as before the pandemic, but still reduced shopping, and when they were in the store, they made a purchase quickly and did not stay in trade because it was frustrating, although the sellers did not behave differently. Moreover, the respondents mostly bought products in stores to which they are "loyal" regardless of brand and origin, while a smaller part started buying exclusively products of SEE companies.

Although there was a ban on moving from place to place, a ban on all shops except grocery and food stores, most respondents said they did not use the internet store more than before, and those who shop online mostly bought clothes, most likely from the reason no clothing store worked. Likewise, most respondents said they feared the impending economy and economic crisis threatening the world and that they had started saving even though they had not done so before. Savings "at home" turned out to be the most common form of savings, and it was concluded that respondents exclusively believe in themselves. The statement "Pandemic is the right

time to become aware and start spending smarter" was rated by most respondents in the range of 1 to 5, with a score of 5, i.e., they agree that it is time for all humanity to start caring about the way money is spent.

Table 5. The correlation of research variables of EI and R&D

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				the			
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		Inter	ased	ing	emic		
		net	produ	crisi	caref		
		shop	cts	S	ul		
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Intern	ation	0		*			
et	Coeffi						
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		*	,	**	,		
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Table 6. The model testing summary

R	R Square	Adjuste d R	Std. Error of the
		Square	
			Estimat
			e
,796ª	,511	,412	,58222
		Square	Square d R Square

The above model reveals that the independent variables can forecast the depended variables by 59,6%, or more exactly 35%, because R Square is ,511. According to Krasniqi (2012), in social

sciences the accepted model is also the model which shows the results not lower than ,100. Based on this conclusion, the respective model can be used to test this phenomenon. Continuously, we will show the results which have to do with the values of regression model coefficient.

Table 7. The coefficients value of testing model **Coefficients** <sup>a</sup>

Mode 1		Unstandardize d Coefficients		Stand ardiz ed Coeff icient s	t	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	ICIT	,500	,325		1,536	,130
	ISH	,750	,178	,750	4,207	,000
	PPI	- 1,250	,309	-,870	- 4,048	,000
	FCC	,500	,252	-,348	1,983	,052
	PC	,545	,325	1,043	4,609	,000

 $B_0$  Coefficient in our case  $B_{\rm icit}$  tell the strength of depended variable consumer electronic baying during covid pandemic ,500 with accuracy of ,130.  $B_1$ - $B_{\rm ISH}$  - Internet shopping tells that business activities are affected and depend on 75% by internet shopping during the Covid-19 considering its value of ,750 and sig ,000. The depended variable of period 2019-2021 of decision making of consumer during Covid 19 situation affect to the depended variable, because the internet shopping happen often within the year. Therefore, this variable should tell the results of only one year period of time.

Thus, the model of regression and its values can be uses in the work of hypothesis testing. Hence, by derivation, we came up with the following formula of Equation Regression model Covid Consumer Decision making of purchase for hypothesis variables testing:

 $\begin{aligned} & Covid \ consumer \ Decision \ making = A_{Internet} \\ & shoping + B \ Purchased \ products + B \ Fear \ of \ the \ coming \ crisis + B \\ & Pandemic \ careful \end{aligned}$ 

Derivate values of Equation Regression model Covid Consumer Decision making of purchase is

### Covid consumer Decision making = 0,500+0,750-1,250+,500+,545

From the given hypotheses, the following was selected:

- H1 Consumers bought less during quarantine than before  $\rightarrow$ ACCEPTED HYPOTHESIS:
  - H2 Consumers used internet shopping more than before the pandemic because they were restricted in movement → REJECTED HYPOTHESIS:
  - H3 Consumers bought more domestic products than usual  $\rightarrow$  REJECTED HYPOTHESIS:
- H4 Consumers have turned to some form of savings for fear of an impending crisis
  - → ACCEPTED HYPOTHESIS;

The first and fourth out of the selected hypotheses are affirmative hypotheses, while the second and third were rejected. In the first hypothesis, it was found that most respondents still bought less than before, that they reduced going to the store and that they were frustrated when buying. However, considering the "story" placed by the media that "store shelves are empty", the respondents stated that they did not buy any more products than before. However, hypothesis number two was rejected because the majority of respondents stated that they did not use internet shopping more than before. Consumers however, prefer to go to the store and buy what they see, rather than shopping online. Likewise, hypothesis three was rejected because the most respondents stated that do not care about the brand or origin of the product, but are faithful to products that they buy for a longer period of time and which meet their needs. Hypothesis four was confirmed because research approves that the respondents are afraid of what the coming crisis brings and to what extent they have started to save more than they did before.

#### 4 Conclusion

Considering the results and above provided discussions, we concluded that consumer behavior is a very important indicator for organizational behavior experts on how and in what way to choose the right marketing strategy. The goal of marketing experts is to change the perception, attitude and motives of consumers and attract consumers to buy their product or service. Today's consumers are faced with a wide range of products and services

that they can buy, as well as a wide range of places where they can buy, but they usually decide to buy based on issues that affect them when buying, and these are, as already mentioned, social, personal and psychological factors.

The conducted research leads to the conclusion that at the time of quarantine, i.e., from March 19 to May 11, situational factors (social) had the greatest impact. Situational factors are related to a specific situation, specific time and specific space and are completely independent of the characteristics of the consumer, the facility and the service being purchased.

As defined, situational factors are related to a specific situation, time, and space that has befallen the entire world. Before the pandemic, consumers sometimes went from boredom to shopping, sometimes out of necessity, and sometimes just not at home, while today consumers try to adjust to the "new normal" and avoid shopping if it is not necessary. Also, since the beginning of the pandemic, it can be seen that mostly younger people who are not in the risk groups of COVID-19 go shopping steadily.

The last but not least, we may conclude that not much is needed to fundamentally change the habits and needs of consumers. Prior to the pandemic, most consumers did not care to which store they would enter, which product they would buy, whether they would spend more money than they anticipated, and how they would behave when buying! Today, consumers are careful about how much money they spend, whether they need the product, and if not, they would rather not buy it. Needs have also changed. Previously, no one thought about disinfectants and face masks, while today they are the most needed items, so both manufacturers and stores are turning to their production and sale. When entering every store, you should wear face masks, which makes most consumers uncomfortable and quickly make purchases and "run away", which shows us that consumers really make purchasing decisions based on their own situational perception.

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## Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

Emin Neziraj was contribute on the analyses part including the questionaries' perped, managing the survey, import data and analysing data by using statistical measure units. All this for interpreted in the article. Driton Syla the main contribute it was problem formulation and literature review also he was take part and in the survey creating.

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