Consumer buying behaviour post and pre COVID analysis- specific reference to South Africa

Ankit Katrodia
School of Management Sciences
Northwest University, South Africa

Keywords
Consumer Buying Behaviour, Post and Pre COVID Analysis, South Africa

Abstract

This research focused on examining the motivational factors that determine the behaviour of consumers in pre and post pandemic times in South Africa by conducting a secondary literature study in the selected universe, with the aim of exploring the key factors in the changes of consumption in men and women, due to the situation of isolation caused by COVID 19. The economic factor referring to the consumption of basic necessities in consumer behaviour is a benchmark for marketing sanitary. Because cleaning, sanitizing and medicinal products have become part of the basic (emerging) consumption of men and women in South Africa. Likewise, the psychological factor, from an exercise and health perspective, is another important factor in times of pandemic. The present study conducted in two phases, pre and post COVID-19 in South Africa. During those period consumers used to buy in a hybrid mode of shopping. Twelve variables (items) are used for the scale development of buying behaviour and taken from the literature and further improved through EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) in the study. The questionnaire was developed using the five-point Likert scale. The survey tool consisted of 30 items. There are 258 respondents were replied through online questionnaire. Two set of questions were asked, and responses were analysed.

Corresponding author: Dr. Ankit Katrodia
Email address for corresponding author: ankit.katrodia@nwu.ac.za
First submission received: 15th August 2022
Revised submission received: 25th November 2022
Accepted: 5th May 2023

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world drastically. Consumers have adapted to the new environment, developing new skills (teleworking) and generating new behaviours. A study carried out by Butu (2020), an international market research and data analysis firm, found that 86% of consumers have changed their behaviour and consumption habits due to the health emergency. Without a doubt, we are in the new normal. For its part, an agency specializing in data analysis and market predictions, revealed that several of these new habits will remain ingrained in the population, even after COVID-19. Some of them are search for safety and well-being, online shopping, and social conscience. Safety and well-being will be a constant for consumers in the new normal. South African people, due to the financial recession, will give greater weight to economic stability. For this reason, large purchases -houses, cars or trips- will be relegated to cheaper purchases that protect them.

Online shopping increased significantly during the pandemic. According to a Butu, online sales totalled S/ 700 million during the first weeks of the national emergency. On the other hand, another research estimates that between 9 and 12 million people will buy online in South Africa in 2020. This means that sales through this channel could reach US$5.6 billion, 100% more than what was recorded in

2019. In this context, it is perfectly possible to reach a growth rate between 50% and 100% compared to 2019. E-commerce is the opportunity for many companies to survive the crisis. People have been very interested in consuming empathetic brands and that they have put themselves in their shoes during the pandemic. The gratitude of consumers will be present by consuming your products and/or services. People have drastically changed their consumption habits. It is important to determine which are the ones that will stay in time so that organizations can establish strategies that allow them to reach their target audience precisely.

The framework proposed for this study examines and compares the key factors associated with the purchase decision process and its outcomes. These factors act as leading variables (generational, economic, social, psychological and cultural cohorts) that were influenced and resultantly impacted purchasing intention and behaviour in a crisis economy. Purchasing intent is often chosen as the basis for research on purchasing behaviour based on literature reviews. The literature shows that purchasing intention is a major predictor of consumer behaviour. Therefore, in this paper, purchasing behaviour of South African consumer's pre and post COIVD is considered and explored.

Literature Review

Brands have had to change their traditional ways of working and adapt to the new needs of consumers from one day to the next. There is no doubt that we live in a time of great emotion for communication professionals. And especially, to pay attention to changes in consumer behaviour and to recalibrate communication strategies. Today it is more important than ever to make sure that we are responding and communicating to our consumers in an effective way and about what really matters to them. Numerous studies already predict certain trends in the evolution of post-COVID-19 consumer behaviour habits that have occurred in response to the impact that the pandemic has had on people's well-being and health, also on entertainment and habits of shopping. Today it is more important than ever to understand these behavioural trends in order to know 'what really matters to them' so that brands can communicate with consumers in an authentic way, that is, build brand loyalty and trust (Butu et al., 2020).

Self-care, the new post-COVID-19 consumer obsession

One trend that has emerged strongly in recent months is that consumers are spending more time on themselves. Many of them have started a new exercise routine or virtual fitness class on YouTube or by downloading a new app to relax or meditate. According to Boshoff (2021), 36% of Spaniards have begun to exercise more in recent months. In addition, in this labour scenario in which many workers have temporarily lost their jobs or work part-time, many consumers seek to fill that time by dedicating themselves. Although the level of these activities – digital, most of them – will probably not remain at the same levels once the pandemic is over, there will be a large number of people who will continue on these platforms who were not there before (Kempen, & Tobias-Mamina, 2022).

Health-tech and telemedicine of the future

Despite the increase in activities related to self-care, what really concerns consumers is that they have let their guard down in their health care during this time. Due to fear of COVID-19, many consumers have avoided or postponed non-urgent medical visits or tests. Undoubtedly, this behaviour will have consequences and the health system will experience a second wave of care for patients with untreated pathologies during this time, once these people feel safe and return to medical consultations (Matiza, 2020).

Technology will play a very important role in offering a better service in the field of medicine once we overcome COVID19, especially to care for those patients who have put their medical needs on hold due to the threat of the pandemic. These risk groups will be the ones that, in turn, take longer to recover the social distance prior to the pandemic. At the same time, it is very likely that health systems will not return to normality like other sectors and will have to face new challenges never before experienced. In recent years we have been experiencing the emergence of technological devices and applications for all kinds of ailments, which offer 24-hour online chat platforms and video of medical consultations, and through which doctors can be ordered at home, specialized according to the symptoms presented. On the other hand, as is the case with Artificial Intelligence, Big Data will be another fundamental element in the field of health to identify hidden patterns in the data, and that can help doctors prescribe more personalized treatments (Dobbelstein, & Naidoo, 2020).

All this knowledge invites to reflect on its impact on commercial levers and, therefore, on the strategies and tactics of companies to respond efficiently to the shopper at the point of sale. It is clear that today's needs are different from those before confinement and will be different from what we will see during the recovery of the new normality. The responses of the companies will be very different and will be totally conditioned to the level of affectation that this situation has produced. In the case of manufacturing companies, we have very different cases depending on how the closure of the perfumery channel has affected the income statement. This will condition the speed of recovery and reaction. The right innovation will be more necessary than ever to grow the profitability of the categories (Rabbi et al., 2021).

E-commerce boom

2 out of 10 shoppers have launched online shopping and could continue in the future. Some operators indicate that currently 25% of sales come from that channel. The confinement of consumers has also caused a sudden growth in the online purchase of consumer products. The rise of e-commerce has been like a "sampling" for the consumer. According to Verschuur (2021), 2 out of 10 shoppers have started shopping online and could continue in the future. However, we have to contextualize and remember that the weight of online on this type of article was below 2% of this market. What is certain is that the current situation has triggered this channel from one day to the next, to the point that some operators indicate that currently 25% of sales come from that channel. The pools on the effect it will have on market share are open; it will depend on how the consumer continues to behave after confinement. Most likely, e-commerce will return somewhat to its being with some growth, but not so high.

In short, this situation is being a driver of change for many companies, leading them to step on the accelerator of their e-commerce and Omni channel plans. In the short term, we will surely see how some retailers do everything possible to strengthen their operations or could even try collaborations with pure players, logistics operators. We will surely see more DTC (Direct to Consumer) laboratories appear. But we should not focus only on e-commerce, but on having an Omni channel vision with the consumer. This crisis has exposed us more than ever to digital, as a means of purchase, communication and entertainment. We cannot have a myopic vision and only contemplate online shopping. Companies are facing an opportunity or threat if they fall behind. It's time to test, test and test.

Collaboration

The commercial and supply chain areas have two main focuses of action: demand planning and product out-of-stock. It is important to jointly design the post-Covid-19 of the year 2020. The search for concrete alliances to be able to get out of this crisis beforehand will most likely make the companies that try it come out stronger. Collaboration during the reconstruction phase is in all possible business areas (assortment review and adjustment, promotions, communication, Omni channel). But without forgetting the need for coordination between sales and supply. For this, two great chapters are pointed out, challenging, where the collaboration will undoubtedly make us give a better answer (Valaskova et al., 2021):

It is time to understand the new consumer habits. Manufacturers and distributors continue to face the challenge of working together to identify shoppers and business opportunities, and to get to know their customers better in order to personalize their offer and communication. In this sense, research on consumption and purchasing habits is more necessary than ever. It is a great opportunity for manufacturers and distributors to join forces: the former with the consumption vision of the category where there is no greater expert than the manufacturer and, the latter, with sell-out and loyalty data, which can shed so much light in a moment of uncertainty like the one we find ourselves in. Join forces, always share and with a common goal: what and for what.

The extraordinary situation caused by Covid-19 has put supply chains to the test, both for manufacturers and distributors, and has shown the importance of having good control of the entire chain, from the factory to the shelves. In this context, the collaboration between the commercial areas with the supply chain is especially relevant. And in this area, there are two main focuses of action: demand planning and product out-of-stock. This last factor is very important, where the consumer, during this crisis, has reduced his level of demand and in the face of a breakage has replaced a product with the immediately competitor. Their loyalty to the brand has in some situations become secondary. In short, it is a situation that we have not chosen, that has tensed us more than ever and that puts us in front of a different, uncertain and changing scenario. To decipher it, it will be necessary to put the new consumer at the centre and build bridges of collaboration, probably in this way we will get out more quickly.

African Consumer Behaviour Trend

A globalized sector impacted by a pandemic that has led the world to confinement to different degrees and periods. COVID-19 outlines a period of important changes for the consumer sector, in many cases accelerating existing trends. A new reality with multiple facets, drawing a consumer with new preferences and decisions. But how can the consumer sector adapt to the uneven impact of COVID-19 in different countries? Is there any certainty in a period marked by uncertainty? Despite the complexity of the environment, global trends are observed that can help in the development of the strategy and transformation plans of companies in the sector (Rogerson, & Rogerson, 2021).

The characteristics of the African buyer could be personal, psychological, cultural and social. These characteristics have an effect on the purchase decision process, which is the need for recognition, information search, evaluation of substitutions, purchase decision and post-purchase. Definitively, the social factors that influence consumer behaviour are related by exogenous influences that can be deducted from the consumer, such as reference groups, family and social roles and statuses (for example, groups of friends, family groups, shopping groups), working groups, virtual groups or communities and consumer action. So, for the present study, social, personal and family factors are influenced by environmental (such as cultural, economic and demographic that have been previously explained) and individual issues that according to the Naidoo (2021) model consumer resources, motivation, participation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values and lifestyle are found. Based on this, social factors were taken as variables: (a) personal and (b) family and friends in purchasing and consumption behaviour in times of Covid-19.

The profile of the new consumer

Concern about the pandemic and its economic effects are producing important changes in consumer habits, preferences and expectations. As Enrique Porta, partner responsible for the Consumer and Retail sector at KPMG in Spain, explains, "knowing and understanding the evolution of the consumer and distinguishing which changes in their behavior are circumstantial and which are structural is essential to adapt business models and achieve, not only guarantee continuity, but even grow in the new reality”. One of the aspects that will change consumption habits the most is, without a doubt, the economic crisis. The decrease in income makes the relationship between quality and price the main purchase factor for six out of ten consumers globally (seven in the case of Spain), according to the report 'Consumers and new reality' , prepared by KPMG in based on a survey of more than 12,300 consumers from twelve countries, including ours. Not surprisingly, more than half of consumers, 52% (58% in Spain), acknowledge a worsening of their economy as a result of the pandemic and 40% (42% in our country) say they are more selective in their shopping.

On the other hand, the psychological impact of the pandemic has made personal security the purchase factor that has grown the most both in Spain and globally (60% and 56% growth, respectively). Ensuring compliance with security measures, both in disinfection and distance in the physical store, will be essential for a consumer who is very concerned about their health and health safety. In this way, having the data that allows drawing the new consumer profile and the implementation of measures to guarantee that the experience responds to their needs requires a significant effort, especially in companies with a presence in numerous countries. "It is important to adapt the measures to the casuistry and evolution of the pandemic in each region while having a consistent strategy at the global level," says Enrique Porta.

Consumer Buying Behaviour pre and post COVID with Reference to South Africa

The spread of covid-19 led governments to impose mandatory isolation measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. This brought a social, economic and environmental impact; the population was forced to change the way of consuming and purchasing channels, adapting to the circumstances of the new reality that will last until the post-pandemic. Along with consumer behaviour, advertising had to transform, especially in digital processes, which, although glimpsed in the past, were accelerated, while other experiences that involved face-to-face had to be left aside. Next, we tell you about the behavioural changes in the types and profiles of consumers in the post-pandemic and the need for advertising to adapt to them.

Consumers in South Africa

No consumer is the same as another, because their behaviour is impacted according to internal factors such as social, economic and cultural, it is also influenced by external circumstances. However, to identify them, different categorizations have been established over the years. The types of South African consumers are divided into two large groups, the convenient and the hyper-consumers. This division is not based exclusively on purchasing power, but on how individuals relate to consumption, their mental processes and their economic rationality when making decisions (Hall et al., 2021). Neither of the two types of consumers is pure, they all have both nuances depending on the purchase. Convenient consumers: within these are people with little digital education, who buy the same product out of habit, even if they know better ones. They seek to save time and money when consuming and see the comfort of proximity to their residence or workplace as an attractive factor. The convenient ones, wanting to get the most out of it, do not get involved with the purchase process nor are they interested in any brand or macro-trend (Wang et al., 2021). They are difficult to captivate and often do not have sufficient access to advertising.

- Hyper-consumers: in this category are people who have access to information and are kept up to date with world events through national and international media, they also have digital education and have the purchasing power to make multi-channel purchases on platforms worldwide. global. Image taken from www.pexels.comImage taken from www.pexels

- Hyper-consumers, due to their characteristics, Hyper-consumers, are more prone to macro trends and base their purchase decisions on aspects such as successful advertising, reputation, the origin of products and identification with brand values.

According to Safari (2022), during the month of April 2020, the largest drop in consumption in history was recorded in South Africa. The highest percentage of Africans focused their purchases only on basic necessities. With the arrival of covid-19, inequality increased and the gap between convenient consumers and hyper-consumers widened, the income of 83% of South Africans was affected and 21% of millennials lost their jobs, this forced them to make purchase decisions according to economic possibilities, restricting expenses to food, housing, health and wellness. This change in context altered consumption habits, both the convenient and the hyper-consumers began to store goods, take advantage of the resources they had, take care of finances and health, be connected and constantly search for information about COVID.

Consumer Behaviour Profiles

- From adapted to curious: They have cognitive flexibility, they like to communicate with those close to them, they are resilient, proactive, and open and began to adapt to change in a calm way. In the post-pandemic they will look for strong emotions and unique sensory moments; To this end, they hope to find companies that have innovative experiences, with gamification processes in which consumers can communicate, play, learn and buy.
- New experts: They like to be in control, to be very well informed and to try new purchase channels, they are also the most appropriate with the consumption processes. After covid-19, they will have a deep need to reconnect with their new emotions; they hope to find companies and initiatives that help the population create stronger emotional ties with their internal and external worlds (Brandtner et al., 2021).
- From cautious to prepper: They are farsighted, they buy food in large quantities, their main source of information about COVID is social networks. Those framed in this profile have a first aid kit, waterproof suits and are people who believe they have the last word on the subject; therefore, they do not lend themselves to discussions. As soon as the virus is normalized, they will seek stability, tranquillity and security; for this they hope to find companies with retail innovations, weekly delivery programs and new discount and loyalty models.
- Fundamentalists: They are extremists as they are motivated by anger, they go against the current, they generate polarization. Within this group are deniers, anti-vaccines and those who violate the security measures issued by the government. In the post-pandemic, the “cancel culture” that characterizes them will evolve, to focus on supporting diversity; They hope to find companies that show continuous progress in this aspect and with transparent production processes.

These consumer profiles are not static, but they change according to the way of adapting or to the experiences. Even people can be framed in several, although one is the predominant one. In the future, as the post-pandemic progresses, these profiles will become blurred, adopting other elements and transforming into the context of the moment. On the other hand, the two types of consumers will remain in force over time but will have changes in their behaviour (Loxton et al., 2022).

In accordance with these changes in consumer behaviour, advertising will have challenges that will involve adapting to the new circumstances that they face in the post-pandemic and, in this way, will be able to maintain brands over time. Advertising must be connected with consumers: it will be essential to listen to them and get to know them in a holistic way, their needs will have to be anticipated, because they may be the ones who determine what will be the next step in the advertising process. It is useless to have a very creative campaign with excellent communication elements, if one is not focusing on the wishes of those who will consume.

Although at the beginning of the post-pandemic, convenient consumers will be more than hyper-consumers, brands must continue to speak and connect with their target audience, offering more than a product or service; In this way, when people again have the opportunity to make purchase decisions other than price, they will choose the brand with which they have not stopped talking.

Issues and Challenges with African Consumer

The situation resulting from the pandemic has promoted and consolidated consumption habits that take advantage of the possibilities of digitization and that tend to incorporate the benefits of sustainability. The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed people's lifestyles. Many of the changes that have occurred have become new habits in work, leisure and consumption. The experts consulted agree that there has been a revolution in the ways of buying due to the pandemic and that, far from declining with the gradual progress towards normality, old premises have been displaced and concepts have been updated. There has been a real quantitative leap. The world is changing at breakneck speed. It has been and is being a full-blown explosion. Historical records have been set (Gu et al., 2021).

It has been the definitive push for many consumers to lose their fear of digital shopping. The fact of not having to travel and the ease and speed of delivery have been key for many users to become loyal through the online channel. Mainly, in the age range of 34 to 45 years, but also it has been seen in those over 54, who have made a qualitative leap in the last year with their first shopping experiences through the network. This has been thanks to the fact that the new scenario has brought with it softer digital shopping methods, allowing orders to be placed at the neighbourhood butcher shop through WhatsApp, for example. It is not strictly about online transactions, but in more senior age profiles it has been the push for this type of purchase promoted by strict confinement (Öztürk, 2020).

Before the pandemic, electronic commerce and digital communication were being implemented and, with their arrival, they have been confirmed and multiplied. There has been an acceleration and I would say that it has been advanced by five years. And it has been thanks to the 'jubilonauts'. If millennials were the usual users before, now it has spread among the older ones, among the so-called grey market (Kereeditse, & Mpundu, 2021). A deeper and more detailed look at the grocery sector indicates that online supermarkets have doubled their market share to 3.6%. In addition to the change in consumer behaviour in favour of digitization, which has already been taking place and has intensified and accelerated with the pandemic, there are trends such as focusing more on life at home, which is linked to doing things for oneself, which seem to be settling. In the same way, there has also been a return to the local as a preference of the buyer.

Buying Behaviour and Retail Structure in South Africa

With most consumers at home, internet usage has skyrocketed. It is normal that in this situation of confinement that we have experienced, the searches for new forms of entertainment have multiplied with the sole objective of keeping us busy. At a time when meeting friends or family in person is very difficult, if not impossible, the search for entertainment has translated into an unprecedented increase in the consumption of audio-visual content platforms on demand and streaming services listening to music, considerably increasing the number of users on these platforms during the months of March and April (Ong et al., 2021). For Spotify, monthly active users increased 31%in the first quarter of this year globally reaching 130 million subscribers worldwide (Rabbi et al., 2021).

This behaviour has had a very interesting impact on the moment of consumer purchase. Social restrictions seem to have been the driving force for many consumers to decide to acquire and consume certain products, especially in the field of entertainment and video games. This form of entertainment demonstrates the consumer's need to escape from reality for a while. This behaviour has translated into an increase in the use of numerous gaming platforms, both by new and existing users (Norman, 2021). Only during the first week of the state of alarm, the digital activity of video games during that period registered a growth of 52%. The gamer community has only grown during confinement, and they mark the trend of increased consumption of video games and e-sports as a new space for brands.

E-commerce boom

Despite initial reluctance about the collection and disinfection of packages, as the weeks went by, consumers became more confident and began to bet on e-commerce. A large part of the food industry had to do without this service because it couldn't cope, but later it became essential, not only for food, but also to buy products related to sports, clothing or entertainment (Madono, 2021). E-commerce is here to stay even longer, and brands are going to have to streamline their online purchasing processes to respond to the new consumer who is looking for a purchase from home. In this sense, technology has become an exceptional ally by allowing brands to offer an Omni-channel experience and quickly adapt to post-COVID changes in consumer behaviour. Up to 62% of African consumers acknowledge that they have increased their online purchases during confinement.

Changes in Behaviour and Attitudes: The Consumer's Revenge post-COVID-19

While many businesses are waiting for the end of the lockdown, many brands are already anticipating the reaction of consumers, especially luxury ones. In China, when the quarantine began to relax, consumers began to buy in an exacerbated way, as if showing revenge for not having been able to buy in recent months. But at the same time, although a spike in consumption is expected, economists predict that it will have a pendulum effect and consumption levels will quickly contract again after a brief period of anxiety to buy again. Undoubtedly, there will be many changes in how and why we buy, motivated by an enduring fear of scarcity (Baicu et al., 2020). Will consumers have the need to have in their cupboards a lot of cans of preserves and soups in addition to packs of toilet paper rolls in order to survive? Brands should be able to anticipate incessant fear and adapt their communication to this feeling. It does not seem that consumption levels will return to the same point as before the pandemic in the immediate future, and this will be the scenario in which brands will have to relate to their consumers (Amicarelli et al., 2021).

The purpose as the backbone of post-COVID19 consumer relations

One of the keys to successfully meeting all the challenges that companies face in managing their relationship with their different audiences, from employees, consumers and other companies operating in the market, is the identification of the corporate purpose. Without a clear and recognizable purpose, it is very difficult for consumers, customers and employees to connect with a brand (Zwanka, & Buff, 2021). All companies must have a purpose, which is nothing more than the reason why it exists and the legacy it will leave in the world, which must be shared and approved by all its stakeholders. According to Mpofu (2011), 75% of consumers do not know if the brands they consume have a purpose. In this sense, its relevance is greater among the youngest audiences: while in the age group from 18 to 25 the level of knowledge of the purpose is 44%, in audiences over 45 years of age it does not exceed 23%.

Research Methodology

The data were collected in two phases, pre and post COVID-19 in South Africa. During those period consumers used to buy in a hybrid mode of shopping. After the pilot study, a refined questionnaire was administered to a new set of respondents. The data is collected to examine the buying behaviour changes in the pre and post COVID-19. The main objective is to explore factors affecting channel preference of consumers belong to South Africa. Twelve variables (items) are used for the scale development of buying behaviour and taken from the literature and further improved through EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) in the study. The questionnaire was developed using the five-point Likert scale. The survey tool consisted of 30 items. There are 258 respondents were replied through online questionnaire. Two set of questions were asked, and responses were analysed.

Exploratory-Factor-Analysis (EFA)

Table 1
Pre Covid-19 Buying Behavior

Variables/Items	**Factors**		
	In store Experience	Delivery Experience	Hedonic experience
Feel and touch experience	0.700		
Health & safety	0.752		
Quality of Products & services	0.719		
Money worthiness	0.755		
Importance of After Sales Services	0.680		
Ease		0.774	
Prompt Delivery		0.768	
Variety		0.754	
Time saving with convince			0.981
Touch & Feel exposure			0.830
Store décor & ambience			0.656
Total variance Extracted-63.36% (KMO-0.807)	EV-21.00%	EV-21.50%	EV-21.57%
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.			

After conducting EFA for measuring of pre-covid-19 buying behaviour, EFA listed three identifiable factors for pre-covid-19 buyer's behaviour which we have named as: In store Experience, Delivery experience, and financial. The third factor, financial consists of three items: Time saving with convince, Touch & Feel exposure, and Store décor & ambience.

Table 2
Pre Covid-19 Buying Behavior

Variables/Items	**Factors**		
	Psychological factors	Discount & e-commerce	Financial
Non-Personal Contacts	0.750		
High Security	0.689		
Personalized Attention through online interaction	0.711		
Vast category of Products	0.690		
Contactless delivery	0.688		
Availability of Discounts on online		0.800	
Online price mechanism		0.815	

Website interaction		0.700	
Discounts			0.707
Cost effectiveness			0.751
Money saving orientation through loyalty program			0.688
Total variance extracted-72.07% (KMO-0.82)	EV-30.49%	EV-23.22%	EV-18.35%
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations; EV- Extracted Variance of an individual Factor			

In the post covid-19 buying analysis of EFA refer table 2, the respondents experience was measured using three variables, as psychological factors, Discount & e-commerce and Financial obtained from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) from the analysis of the responses.

The pandemic due to covid-19, impacted physical connection among persons, The significant portion of the African population apprehensive about socializing during same time.

Conclusion

In all emerging economies including South Africa, most businesses are Small and Medium Enterprises, with fewer employees, less capital, and specialized businesses showing the same characteristics. Owners who carry out most of the business activities (marketing, quality, accounting or purchasing and logistics management). Most of them are family owned and their short-term vision is focused on results and sales. The most serious problems, lack of business management experience and limited knowledge of the market, as a rule, lead to the dissolution of the company. Therefore, they need to plan for the future and not just focus on day-to-day sales and marketing (Li et al., 2022). Nowadays, companies of all sizes, especially MSMEs, are turning to educational institutions and research to better understand consumer behaviour in both traditional (face-to-face) and virtual markets. Similarly, governments and institutions play a fundamental role in bringing market knowledge together with small business owners to develop strategies and profit from commercial or business research projects. This article.

Consumption develops habitually and contextually, but recent research on consumer behaviour has shown that shopping habits have changed or changed depending on the context. Consumers Life cycle stage (single, married, children, grandparents). It also includes jobs, communities, neighbours and friends. Technical context is most advanced with the advent of innovative technologies that have broken the old habits of consumption in almost all human aspects, including artificial intelligence (virtual and augmented reality), smartphones, Internet 4.0 and e-commerce. It is a new way to buy products and enjoy services, ideas and experiences that directly influence the online shopping and consumption process. Coexistence, context of awareness and well-being, influence on consumption habits in public and common places, and respect for the consumption of organic and healthy products, all of which are rules and regulations related to public policy and social behaviour, consumption of regulated, socially safe, friendly and integrated products and services. External context (predictability), consisting of the fact that some of them are not under human control, such as natural disasters, and what causes them in one way or another, such as a global pandemic, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finding and Suggestions

From the results obtained and from the perspective of culture as a tool to understand and learn the differences attributed to national culture, as a key element from which consumer behaviour can be differentiated in different areas or countries. It can be inferred that the impact generated by the Covid-19 health contingency on purchasing behaviours due to social confinement significantly influences consumers in South Africa and is different between these two countries. Regarding the significant differences in purchasing behaviour based on gender, in the face of a pandemic such as Covid-19, there are no significant differences in purchasing between men and women, so the hypothesis is not rejected. In other words, both men and women buy and consume in the same way, regardless of gender in times of Covid-19 (Ngoc, & Kriengsinyos, 2022).

In order to find the significant differences in the behaviour of purchase and consumption, in a more detailed way, we proceeded to analyse the behaviours, which allowed to identify the categories and specific variables of purchase and that will help the business readers of this study, to make business decisions in their companies. In addition, these detailed analyses will provide theory on consumer behaviour in times of pandemic, since these intercultural studies on consumer behaviour will serve to fill an important gap in the scientific literature on South African culture. From what is observed in the results, it can be said in general terms that Africa does not present similarities in consumption behaviour and compared to the other countries. Only the variables of the economic factor, the psychological factor and social factors, present a relationship that influences purchasing behaviour in the face of social isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic Covid-19 (Tseane-Gumbi, 2020). Psychological factors, consumption with mental attitude such as humour, family life, protection and optimism do not present a significant relationship with any of the categories, nor variables proposed in the study (neither completely, nor by country, nor by generational cohort, nor by gender). In other words, the mental attitude in general is not related to consumption or purchasing behaviour in times of pandemic. However, the psychological factors produced by exercising and changing eating habits are significantly related to the impact that Covid-19 has on purchasing and consumption in times of pandemic (Matiza, & Kruger, 2021).

Area for Further Research

The research has limitations, the study was carried out quantitatively, so it is necessary to carry out an investigation from the qualitative approach, to know the feelings, emotions and explanatory reasons of consumers in their purchasing behaviour. Likewise, it is recommended to analyse the behaviour by generational cohorts (Baby Boomer Generation, Generation X, Y and Z), which would contribute with a more detailed behaviour analysis, based on the subject's profile. Although this study did not intend to measure purchase frequency as a variable to measure online purchasing behaviour, due to the characteristics of the purchasing situation in the face of the pandemic (online and at home), the results found and analysed.

Adding direct purchase intent elements and exploring the relationship between behaviour would provide more decisive conclusions for this assumption. However, one of the questions in the research on the purchase intention of vegetables and fruits in virtual stores, revealed the purchase intention of African consumers of these products, resulting in the fact that they prefer to buy fresh products from first need in traditional markets, despite the health contingency. Data, which can provide business knowledge to MSMEs in the sample countries. Since on average 97% of the companies are neighbourhood stores, convenience stores and retailing family, these companies must learn to adapt commercial messages, as well as products and services to the target culture, it is a condition with which they will be able to reach the consumer and ensure the first step towards commercial success.

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