



Trends in Consumers Towards Online Shopping After Coronavirus Pandemic

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Abstract:

Online marketing has become popular in world in general and the Arab world in particular is witnessing the desirability and satisfaction of the world. However, he did not meet his right in Algeria, which knows of the delay in adopting commercial transactions in the electronic environment despite growing consumer demand for Internet use, their trends towards online shopping. In our view, this may be due to the lack of adequate mechanisms affecting the Algerian user in the adoption of shopping. Shopping from commercial electronic apps, or Algerian consumer distrust of this type of transaction (online shopping) due to the novelty of the concept in Algeria.

Key words: Online marketing; Coronavirus Pandemic; online shopping; Online Apps; consumer.

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about an increase in online shopping because of government-imposed restrictions and consumer anxiety over the potential health risk associated with in-store shopping. By end of 2021, many health concerns had been alleviated through efforts such as vaccinations and reductions in hospitalizations in certain countries. Some governments started to relax their restrictions and consumers started to return to in-store shopping, creating the possibility that the volume of online shopping would decrease once stores reopened. However, consumers may continue to shop online more than they did prior to the pandemic because of their experience during the lockdown (Norman Shaw, Brenda Eschenbrenner, Daniel Baier., 2022).

Online shopping is the process of buying goods and services from merchants who sell on the Internet. Since the emergence of the World Wide Web, merchants have sought to sell their products to people who surf the Internet. Shoppers can visit web stores from the comfort of their homes and shop as they sit in front of the computer. Now a day, online shopping has become popular among people, they have become techno savvy and feel very comfortable in using internet. So online shopping has becoming a trend that is why it is necessary to make a study on online shopping usage and perception. (Pratiksinh, 2014)

When shopping online, similar constructs can be employed, but with a modified meaning. More specifically, tangibles refer to the design of the website, reliability is a measure of the accuracy of the website, responsiveness is the ease of placing an order and checking out, assurance is the trust that the correct product will be delivered, and empathy is a measure of any interaction with customer support. (Holloway B.B, Beatty S.E, 2003) For e-commerce, after-sales support needs to be included in the measure of quality as the sale is not complete until the merchandise is delivered and the customer satisfied. (Camilleri, 2021)

Online shopping is becoming a suitable way to make all your purchases, whether you're at home in office, or in a different country. This is especially true for developed countries, where every store has its website you can buy from. You can easily convey about the promotions like cash on delivery and special discounts on online purchases. (Rizwana Bashir, Irsa Mehboob, , 2015)

Economists said that there are fundamental changes in consumer trends in purchases during and after the "Corona" pandemic, most notably avoiding random purchases, giving priority to price in determining the purchase decision, in addition to

declining loyalty to brands, especially luxury ones, in addition to not being extravagant and buying luxuries.

In light of this shift in the purchasing behavior of consumers; It seems that the actual going to stores no longer satisfies the needs of consumers, who seek to entertain themselves through shopping. It also seems that there will be no room for shoppers, in a post-Corona world, to view the goods and merchandise on store shelves themselves.

The changes in consumption habits brought about from the covid-19 pandemic is completely reshaping the consumer profiles examined by different organizations. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the consumer behavior studies by analysing changes post-disasters. Our paper aims at understanding Algerians' lifestyle and behaviours during and post crisis in order to explore what behaviours people would keep after the disaster and to identify possible megatrends. (Sorrentino, Leone, Caporuscio, 2022)

People have been forced to live differently, and as a result they are also shopping differently and spending their time differently. Staying indoors has naturally increased the need for online shopping. (Sorrentino , Leone , Caporuscio, 2022)

Of the above, the following problems arise: What trends have been formed among Algerian consumers towards online shopping after the coronavirus pandemic?

1. Online Shopping

Online shopping has been around for about twenty-five years. It has grown in popularity significantly. Today, we can purchase nearly anything online. In fact, retail experts say that online shopping will soon overtake traditional shopping in monetary terms. (online shopping definition and meaning, s.d.)

1.1 Definition of online shopping

Online shopping is the process of buying goods and services from merchants over the Internet. Since the emergence of the World Wide Web, merchants have sought to sell their products to people who spend time online. Shoppers can visit web stores from the comfort of their homes and shop as they sit in front of the computer. (Solis, 2023)

Consumers can buy a huge variety of items from online stores, and just about anything can be purchased from companies that provide their products online. Books, clothing, household appliances, toys, hardware, software, and health insurance are just some of the hundreds of products consumers can buy from an online store. (Solis, What Is Online Shopping?, 2023)

1.2 The Effects of Online Shopping

Online shopping is exceptionally efficient during the holidays; shoppers do not have to bother with the long, exasperating lines, and they get to cut back on gas spending by staying indoors. Due to the lack of operating costs, online retailers can sell goods at lower prices; this makes the experience of online shopping not only faster and convenient, but it is also far cheaper than going to the physical store. (Samuel, 2017)

Although these facts may make online shopping look like the best course of action, there are many downsides to doing online business. Back-order goods can prove to be exceedingly trying for shoppers, especially during the holidays. Shoppers also lose the person-to-person communication that an online retailer cannot provide. If issues arise during a purchase, having a human contact can resolve an issue faster and, oftentimes, more efficiently; it is also easier to be refunded as well. (Svonavec, 2017)

Online shopping is becoming an ever-growing replacement to brick-and-mortar business. This change can definitely be seen as a positive progression, but it could also prove to be a great downfall. The loss of brick-and-mortar business can render many individuals jobless; this can hurt many people financially, and job opportunities for individuals in the labor force could drop significantly. (Svonavec, The Effects of Online Shopping, 2017)

3. Changing consumer behaviour trends: factors and reasons

Consumer behavior is always changing and evolving, however the changes seen recently have altered the business world significantly. There has been an acceleration in the shift to online shopping, an increased need for omni-channel, and major changes in consumer shopping habits – all brought on by the pandemic. (Wertz, 2021)

3.1. Factors

The period of home quarantine and the closure of commercial centers and shopping places for long periods of time contributed to the increase in desires consumers to shop and shop in a safe environment, and to enhance the online shopping experience, which led to a change individual's consumer behavior.

There are several factors that supported this new trend, especially at the beginning of the “Corona” crisis, most notably the unavailability of some goods, the disruption of global supply lines, in addition to the high prices of some commodities, and the preference of some countries to reduce exports due to lack of production, which caused a change in consumer behavior.

It also contributed to the increase in the trend towards electronic shopping during the outbreak of the epidemic. It is a state of confusion and lack of transparency in the

interpretation of how the infection is transmitted. Is it transmitted through droplets through the air or by contact with external surfaces, such as traditional currencies? Cash and paper, which contributed to the reluctance of many consumers to deal directly with shops and stores, and they turned to electronic purchase and payment for goods purchased by electronic means or digital currency, which contributed to a major shift towards contactless digital payments.

And the higher the level of the social class to which the consumer belongs, the greater his tendency towards electronic shopping, and this is confirmed by many studies that the social class to which the individual consumer belongs has a strong influence on his purchasing behavior and consumption pattern, as consumers with a higher social class in society choose goods of high quality, regardless of its price, compared to middle- and lower-class consumers, and its value is paid by credit card, while most purchases of lower and middle-class consumers are paid in cash. This is indicated by the results of the interviews with experts and specialists in the field of e-commerce.

3.2. Reasons

Perhaps the persistence of consumers "watching the goods" trend - despite all the adverse circumstances at the present time - will cause these people to practice this habit online, rather than by visiting the shops themselves. In fact, some studies show that reviewing goods and products in this way, or what is known as "watching the goods electronically", can give one the same amount of pleasure and social networking experience that he derives from visiting the stores himself. These studies also indicate that the shopper can obtain electronically the same information that he seeks to obtain when he visits stores and commercial centers.

But the irony is that some of the ways in which consumers used to view goods electronically, are closely related to the experience of visiting stores as well. Either before "viewing merchandise online" or after doing so. It should be noted that electronic shopping is distinguished from its traditional counterpart, in that it does not take much time, due to the keenness of those in charge of it to shorten the stages that consumers must go through before reaching the payment stage.

"The Corona pandemic was a financial educational school for a large number of consumers, as it brought about radical and remarkable changes in consumers' financial and purchasing behaviors."

The order of motives for using e-shopping from the consumer's point of view:

-Achieve speed and ease in the process of shopping from within the home 24 hours a day.

-The Internet has multiple advantages through which it is possible to create sites for direct contact with consumers, exchange information accurately and quickly, and deliver products to consumers quickly and efficiently.

- Easy access to local and international markets and comparison between the products in them.

- Provides new distribution services such as home delivery. The results of several interviews with e-commerce experts showed that the Internet is an open market.

- Enabling consumers to complete shopping operations effectively, quickly and at the lowest cost, regardless of where they are in the world. In the regions where the product is not available in regular stores, the customer does the online shopping process without going to major cities where the product to be purchased is available.

- Enables the consumer to know the value of his purchases before making the purchase.

-It saves the consumer's effort and time that he and his family used to spend during traditional shopping.

4.The pandemic changed shopping methods forever, especially with the increase in online purchases

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way people use the internet for e-commerce and other digital tools, with many consumers reporting that they shop online frequently.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the transition towards a more digital world."

4.1. The biggest shift is in emerging economies

According to the survey, the largest shift in online shopping among consumers has occurred in emerging economies. Purchases across most product categories increased from six to 10 percentage points, with the largest gains being made in information and communication technology, electronics, gardening, furniture, cosmetics and personal care, among others.

However, the survey revealed that the average monthly internet spending per capita has decreased significantly. Consumers in both emerging and developed economies postponed spending on larger items, while spending on tourism and travel fell by a whopping 75%.

"The ban is over, but online demand has increased".

4.2 After Corona, life is normal, but it is digital in everything

The Corona epidemic led to massive changes in all aspects of life, and led to an accelerated digital transformation that left its effects in various economic sectors, and the pandemic created new social habits due to the radical shift in lifestyles and work until it was no longer possible to return to the lifestyle that prevailed before the pandemic. The concept of life itself has become different. This "normal life" is no longer the same as it was before. It is a natural life, but it is digital in every way.

Humanity has become accustomed to using modern technologies in various fields, and the Internet and digital applications have become an essential part of our daily lives. We buy, shop, order food, hold business meetings, rent and sell apartments and buildings, and book plane tickets and hotels via the Internet.

The epidemic has greatly accelerated the application of new technologies for a large number of retailers within a very short period, bearing in mind that the adoption and adoption of these technologies at work would have taken many years had it not been for the pandemic, but instead of all this long time, they were adopted in just weeks.

With the noticeable decline in the spread of the "Corona" virus, the concept of life itself has become different, as "normal life" has not returned as it was in the past, as "normal life" today is digital life in everything.

E-marketing experts have predicted that the changes that occur in online shopping are likely to continue beyond the Corona pandemic, as it will become an approved way of life in most countries, based on the statements of online shopping respondents. This digitization is due to the use of modern technologies and applications in various fields of life, as the Internet has become an integral part of our daily life. We have become learning, buying and selling, ordering food and clothing, booking travel tickets and hotels, and holding meetings... via electronic applications.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we find that Many recent studies have proven that there are modifications or changes in consumer behavior during and after the period experienced by all peoples of the world due to the outbreak of the emerging corona virus (COVID-19).

Before that, we witnessed a great demand for purchases, whether on food, consumer or other requirements. Consumer behaviors have changed during the

pandemic, and the change continues even after the lockdown period has ended significantly.

The difficult times that the world went through in the Corona pandemic, e-commerce has become a ray of hope for merchants from all fields and different cultures, as online shopping can be considered a gateway to a new turning point for e-commerce in the world even after the Corona virus. Where it can be said that e-commerce may be considered a medicine for many markets and shops, which will save them from bankruptcy.

E-commerce has become everyone's refuge even after the closure has stopped due to the epidemic. Rather, it has become the only outlet for trade and sale at the present time. In view of the health conditions and what customers have experienced in electronic shopping in terms of saving effort and time, speed in contracting and implementation is one of the most important advantages and characteristics of electronic commerce, which has a major role in its growth and spread.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put social media marketing squarely at the center of any company's communication strategy, as this type of marketing is fast becoming one of the most effective ways to market during a crisis.

This type of marketing will continue to advance, so it is important for companies to have a strong online presence to connect directly with customers and thrive in the new normal.

"It seems that consumers are determined to continue shopping online, even after the Corona pandemic."

Recommendations:

Presenting new and attractive offers to keep up with the prevailing trends that invade the arena of social media platforms to introduce products.

Activating the free delivery service in the same area, and offering discounts on delivery requests to remote areas.

Safe electronic platforms must be provided for online sales, to help consumers change their shopping habits in the long term.

Websites and social media should provide well all information on the products offered for sale.

Even after the Corona pandemic, the Algerian consumer must change the direction of his traditional purchasing behavior towards online shopping, because this type of shopping saves time and effort for the latter.

Merchants should take into account this shift in consumer behavior, set appropriate prices, and make price cuts, given that this new change threatens the exit of some merchants who sell at unjustifiably high prices from the market, after competition escalates.

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