

## The Effect of the Pandemic on the Consumer

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**Abstract:** The pandemic is an epidemic that is spreading over large areas with very high speed, in the last 250 years there have been 10 major devastating epidemics for which solutions have been found and new rules of life and hygiene have been established. Every pandemic brings disruption, this is something unprecedented, lived for the first time and people have to adapt their standard of living to survive, is forced to change their lifestyle, consumption and hygiene.

**Keywords:** pandemic; epidemic; rules of life; survival; adaptation consumption

We will study the effect of the pandemic on the change of consumers' habits according to the following hypotheses:

- *Trends in consumer behavior;*
- *The new way of life and the orientation towards online commerce;*
- *Reaction to change, crisis and digitalization.*

### Trends in Consumer Behavior

The crisis generated by the COVID 19 epidemic has generated a series of behaviors among consumers:

- the massive reduction of expenses, they spent less in the consumption category, because the pandemic has a severe effect on their professional status, they are over 45 years old, being directly affected, their activity was temporarily or permanently suspended, including people who stayed at home with minor children following the suspension of classes. 78% of them shop

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less often, 64% shop strictly necessary, 33% consider the brand of the product is less important for them, in the current conditions;

- keep calm and spend, have not changed their consumption habits, are not directly affected by the pandemic, keep calm, the share of products sought by the grocery and less the rest of the categories;
- accumulates stocks, is most common in the elderly, pessimists and those who do not trust the future, they are worried about the future of their families and worry in the long;
- run, pessimists who have exhausted stocks in stores future of products both on groceries and on detergents and disinfectants. Due to them, the effect was to restrict the quantities of products purchased. The categories that were not impacted are home appliances, textiles and entertainment products.
- hibernate and spend, spend the most on all categories of products, this includes young people who are more concerned about the impact of the pandemic, 40% of them said they shop less often, 42% significantly changed the products purchased and 46 % of them are more interested in brands.

### **The New Way of Life and the Orientation Towards Online Commerce**

This is one of the visible effects of the pandemic, in terms of consumer behavior, is to choose the online environment for shopping and other transactions. The frequency of online shopping has increased a lot in Romania, since the declaration of the pandemic, people have chosen this method of payment regardless of whether they bought food or other goods and services, or paid fines or taxes.

Due to the imposed restrictions, certain sectors of activity were negatively impacted: tourism, restaurants, cafes (HORECA), beauty salons, banks, medical offices, schools and kindergartens. In order to develop and save their business, merchants have entered the digitalization of sales, online orders, fast home deliveries. Even if this crisis will not be long. retail networks will be reconfigured, because the purchasing model will change, home purchases will gain ground and companies that make deliveries will register a significant increase. The crisis can be an opportunity to cut red tape, speed up the digitalisation of the economy and a way for companies to gain time and productivity.

### **Reaction to Change, Crisis and Digitalization**

The world is changing at a very high speed, the digital environment is doubling at 14 months as the speed of evolution, everyone was reactive, did not expect the crisis to come. Ridy Giuliani said, "I was not prepared for the 9/11 attacks, but as mayor I was prepared for calamities. Things are not complicated, we complicate them. The principles we can adapt to are:

- Observe - intelligent people document themselves and adapt.
- Reflect - you are not allowed to go to bed until you talk to yourself about the quality of your life, marriage, life in the city where we live, the brain needs 40 hours to make the optimal decision.
- Act.
- Believe - the belief system governs us, the SARSCOV crisis 2 is a cumulation of crises, economic, global, crisis generated by digital transformation, crisis of distrust of anyone.

It is difficult to predict whether, after the end of the crisis, consumer habits will remain online-oriented or return to old habits with visits and walks through restaurants, cafes and malls, where they are guaranteed to seek socialization and interaction with others.

The way to spend the money will be much more modest, the price will be in the purchase decision, customers will buy strictly the things they need, will focus on local products and will support local producers.

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