

Pandemic and the Buying Behavior of Students

Kyla Marie Gonzaga, Evangeline Peñamora, Trisha Denice Robles

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Marketing Management

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic affects the lives of many individuals. Consumer perception and purchasing behaviors have shifted as a result of the government's lockdown and social distancing mandates. Also, markets need to change quickly to manage demand-side tremors, which include panic buying. Consumer purchases of household goods and groceries increased dramatically across the country as soon as the lockdown was announced. This indicates an increase in customer anxiety and panic buying, as they are concerned that the restrictions will last too long and worsen the situation. The status of the pandemic this year leaves the community uncertain. People are also not sure when this disaster will end. Consumers believe that saving money on essential necessities by purchasing as many as possible is an alternative way to adapt to the uncertainty. The researcher used a descriptive research method with 150 LPU Laguna students who participated in this study. These respondents are the business management students, which are the marketing management and operations management students, with an age range of 18–20 years old. The respondents are more female than male. It simply indicates that women do the majority of the grocery shopping. They are more active in going to the market. To reduce interaction with others, consumers go grocery shopping once a week or once a month. People got scared to go out of their homes because of the fear of viruses. Consumers prefer to spend more money when purchasing products in bulk to stock their homes. The majority of the business management students purchased food and beverages rather than healthy products and beauty products.

Keywords: *COVID 19 pandemic, consumer behavior, consumer perception, panic buying*

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 is not an easy year for everyone. There are a lot of crises that people experience, and one of these is the novel coronavirus, which spread globally after its outbreak in China. Every day, we read about the virus's high rates of infection and death. As of November 22, 2020, confirmed global infections had reached 57,882,183, in addition to 1,377,395 confirmed deaths in 220 countries (World Health Organization, 2020). The global pandemic might be expected to create market and economic volatility, as well as vastly intensified consumer uncertainty, these effects have been amplified during the current COVID-19 pandemic due to the nonexistence of a vaccine (Li and De Clercq, 2020; Liu et al., 2020).

Nobody knows when it will end, so the uncertainty shifts consumption patterns. The consumer decision has been exacerbated by periods of government-enforced self-isolation for returning travelers or individuals who may have been exposed to the virus, as well as broader city- or country-wide periods of social distancing in which people were largely restricted to their homes. People panicked and began stockpiling products after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. They purchased medical supplies such as hand sanitizer and masks as well as household necessities such as toilet paper. Soon, both brick-and-mortar and online stores were struggling to keep up with demand, and price gouging for supplies became rampant. We can see that people react differently to crises.

According to Paul Marsden, a consumer psychologist at the University of the Arts London, as quoted by CNBC, "panic buying can be understood as playing to our three fundamental

psychological needs," which include the need to feel in control of your actions, relatedness—the need to feel that we are doing something to benefit our families—and competence—the need to feel like smart shoppers making the right choice.

All of these are psychological aspects, and they are the same reasons why we have "retail therapy," which is a response to many various sorts of personal problems; however, there are additional layers during a pandemic. One reason for this is that the global spread of COVID-19 has been accompanied by a great deal of confusion and, at times, contradictory information. When people get conflicting information from many sources, they are more inclined to over-prepare rather than under-prepare. The mob mentality comes in second. Seeing other individuals stock up confirms the decision to stock up. Nobody wants to be left in the dust with no resources. Survival psychology recognizes that individuals' behaviors might alter as a result of specific circumstances such as natural disasters, healthcare crises, and terrorist strikes. Forbes (2017) These behavioral alterations might include unfavorable crowd mentality, panic buying, changes in discretionary shopping patterns, and investing decisions. As a result, we believe that the COVID-19 situation will not only heighten consumer apprehension but also have broader ramifications on purchasing decisions. This method identified instances of panic purchasing, herd mentality, and shifting discretionary spending, which we used as the foundation for our research of consumer behaviors throughout the COVID-19 period.

Review of Literature

Females are almost certain to pay attention to COVID-19 and conform to moderation efforts, according to a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America. Seidman said that many investigations have indicated that men are less inclined to follow suggestions for routine yearly wellness tests and other preventive measures. Women have been responsible for family wellbeing, whereas men have been more hesitant to discuss family wellbeing.

According to Silva, A.; Nayga, R.M., Jr.; Campbell, B.L.; Park, J.L. (2020), to qualify for the study, the respondents should have been 18 years old or older, and they should have identified themselves as one of the main grocery buyers in their household. Respondents were informed about the COVID-19 pandemic before being asked how they go grocery shopping during the pandemic.

Consumer expenditure on groceries is rising in various grocery stores, and online retailers are experiencing the same growth and increase in consumer expenditure on groceries. (Leatherby, L.; Gelles, D., 2020)

According to Shou (2013), the presence of supply disruption is a condition in which the normal supply of products in the supply chain is interrupted and is also often observed during a disaster or other unwanted disasters. It also leads to a feeling of insecurity.

Panic buying during pandemic

According to Hendrix (2013), panic buying has been linked to feelings of weakness and unsteadiness under certain conditions. The status of the pandemic in 2020 leaves the community uncertain. People are also not sure when this disaster will end. Accordingly, saving for essential necessities by purchasing as many as possible is an alternate way to adapt to the sentiment of uncertainty.

According to Islam T. et al. (2020), during the COVID-19 epidemic, customers appeared to be more impulsive and compulsive buyers. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has decimated the world economy and healthcare system, instilling dread, terror, and uncertainty in billions of people. Because of the limited external connectivity and time during the pandemic, the usage of

social media skyrocketed. The temptation to buy rashly has tempered the favorable relationship between enthusiasm and imprudent action. Panic buying has been a consistent element of the COVID-19 pandemic. To acquire a better grasp of the situation and give management insights for policymakers and marketers, it is vital to investigate consumers' panic buying patterns during COVID-19.

According to Arafat, Kar, Marthoenis et al. (2020), pandemic occasions cause panic buying (PB), and because of that, there are things that are determined to happen, including the increased buying of more essential necessities compared to regular purchases. Usually, a disaster or an outbreak results in an imbalance between supply and demand. The common thing is not well understood for many reasons. First off, its precise mental underpinnings are indistinct; a feeling of apparent shortage, being in charge, social learning, and an absence of trust in the authorities have all been proposed as possible drivers of panic buying.

According to Bonneux and Van Damme (2006), plagues and pandemics are the looming challenges to general wellbeing, where dread and panic are truly essential human reactions. Panic behavior is always present whenever disasters and calamities occur, and it threatens the ability to cope and destroys the existing equilibrium. Many times, people develop different behaviors that cannot be explained, which contrast from nation to nation and culture to culture. Panic buying, or the increased buying behavior of everyone, was observed during this pandemic. In any case, the specific mental clarification responsible for it has not been looked for efficiently. As a result, they planned a push to distinguish the possible mental explanations behind panic purchasing behavior during crises, such as pandemics.

Conceptual Framework

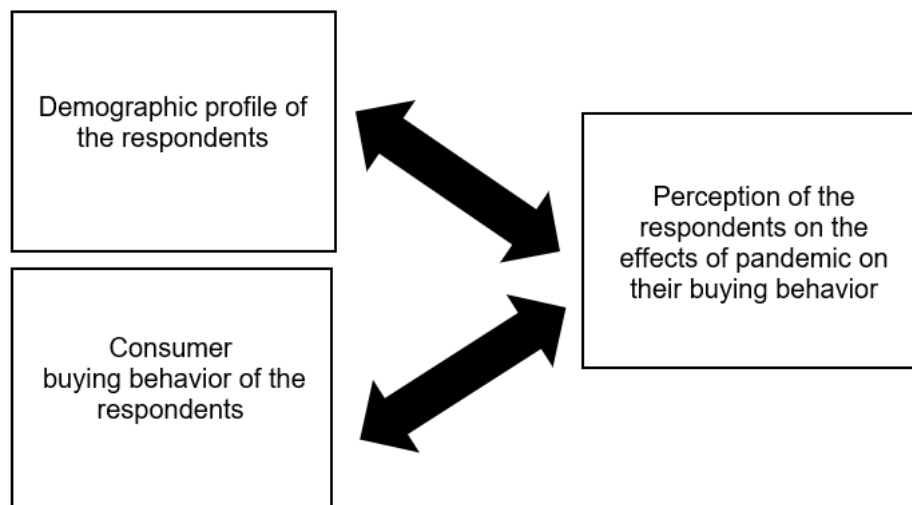


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

This conceptual framework shows the independent variable which covers the demographic profile of the respondents, including sex, age, and college programs. It also covers the consumer buying behavior of the respondents in terms of frequency, expenditures, and types of products bought during the pandemic. The dependent variable is the respondents' perception of the effects of the pandemic on their buying behavior. The figure also shows that there is a significant relationship between respondents' perceptions of the impacts of the pandemic on their buying behavior and their demographic profile when grouped by sex, age, and program. There is also a significant relationship between respondents' assessments of the impacts of the pandemic

on their buying behavior and their consumer buying behavior when grouped by frequency, expenditures, and categories of items purchased.

Objectives of the Study

This research study is to determine the effects of the pandemic and the buying behavior of the students. The researchers aim to determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age and program, to determine the consumer buying behavior of the respondents in terms of frequency expenditures and types of products bought during the pandemic, to determine the perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior, to determine which among the demographic variables sex, age and program influence the buying behavior of the respondents, to determine the significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of the pandemic on their buying behavior and their consumer buying behavior when grouped according to frequency, expenditures, and types of products bought.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method was used in this study to collect necessary data information needed. The descriptive method is used to describe the characteristics of the students who participated in the study. The researchers selected Business Management Students of Lyceum of the Philippines – Laguna as the respondents of the study.

The data was gathered with the help of survey questionnaires as a tool that is composed of demographic profile and survey questionnaire. Part one which is the Demographic profile contains the basic characteristics of a respondents such as sex, age, and college programs because this will help the researchers to determine which among the demographic variables influence the buying behavior of the respondents. In part two, is a set of in a Likert's Four-point scale that was formulated measuring the effect of pandemic on their buying behavior; 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents agree and 4 represents strongly agree responses. Different statistical tools were used to measure the data and information collected from the respondents. Frequency distribution and percentage method were use to determine the demographic profile of the target respondents according to sex, age and college programs. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of agreement on the effects of pandemic on the buying behavior. Moreover Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of the pandemic on their buying behavior and their demographic profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic profile of the respondents is looked upon in terms of sex, age and program. Table 1 shows demographic profile of the respondents. The data gathered shows that more female is more engaged in answering the survey and also ages between 18 to 20 years old. In the study of Silva, A.; Nayga, R.M., Jr.; Campbell, B.L.; Park, J.L. (2020), respondents are 18 – 23 years old, and they identify themselves as one of the main grocery buyers in their household.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Female	97	64.7
Male	53	35.3
Age		
18-20	94	62.7
21-23	55	36.7
24-26	1	0.7
26 and above	0	0
Program		
Marketing Management	114	76
Operations Management	36	24

Table 2 shows the frequency the respondents go to the supermarket. The data gathered shows that most of the respondents go to supermarket once a week and once a month. The COVID-19 pandemic causes a scarcity. According to Shou (2013), the presence of supply disruption is a condition in which the normal supply of products in the supply chain is interrupted and is also often observed during a disaster or unwanted disasters. It also leads to a feeling of insecurity.

Table 2. Times the respondents go to the supermarket

How many times do you go to the supermarket	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	0	0
Once a week	46	30.7
Twice a week	16	10.7
Once a month	46	30.7
Twice amonth	42	28

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents are investing 2000 and above in buying necessities. Consumers buy products in bulk to stock up. According to Islam, T. et al. (2020), during the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers seemed to be more impulsive and obsessive buyers. The global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged the world economy and healthcare system, igniting much fear, panic, and uncertainty among billions of people. The use of social media increased because there was a restricted connection from the outside and a limited time during the COVID-19 pandemic. The positive connection between excitement and imprudent behavior has been moderated by the desire to purchase rashly. Panic buying has become known as a reliable feature of the COVID-19 outbreak. It is necessary to examine consumers' panic buying behaviors during COVID-19 to gain a better understanding of the situation and provide managerial insights for policymakers and marketers alike.

Table 3. The expenditures of the respondents in buying necessities

How much do you invests in buying necessities?	Frequency	Percent
500	4	2.7
1000	11	7.3
1500	27	18
2000 and above	108	72

Table 4 shows that the respondents prefer food and beverages products that they stock most. They stock food and beverages so that they will not always do grocery and interact to other people. Panic buying according to Hendrix (2013) has related to seen sentiment of weakness and unsteadiness of specific circumstances. The status of the pandemic in 2020 leaves the community uncertain. People are also not sure when this disaster will end. Accordingly saving essential necessities by purchasing as many as possible is an alternate way to adapt to the sentiment of uncertainty.

Table 4. Perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior

Responsiveness	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Fear drives me to buy a lot of things and stock it at home	3.43	Strongly Agree
Thinking of not having the products I need lead me to buy it more	3.45	Strongly Agree
I panic when I think that essential product may run out from shelves, so I buy then in bulk	2	Disagree
Quarantine drives me to buy more things that I usually do	3.51	Strongly Agree
The feeling of uncertainty influences my buying habits	3.43	Strongly Agree
Changing to less expensive products to spend less	3.4	Strongly Agree
Increased interest in buying products that maintain well-being or health	3.68	Strongly Agree
Stock up food and other necessities	3.78	Strongly Agree
Making more sustainable choices in purchasing to spend less	3.61	Strongly Agree
Increased online shopping while decreased store visits	3.69	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.412	Strongly Agree

Notes: 1:00-1.74 - Strongly Disagree; 1.75-2.49 - Disagree; 2.50-3.24 - Agree; 3.25-4.00 - Strongly Agree

Table 5 shows the relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior and their demographic profile when grouped according to sex, age, and program. In the P-value, it shows that the two variables are not significant.

Table 5. Significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior and their demographic profile

Demographic Profile	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	-0.032	0.695	Not Significant
Age	0.092	0.264	Not Significant
Program	-0.085	0.298	Not Significant

Note: Significant if p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance

Table 6 shows the relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior and their consumer behavior when grouped according to

frequency, expenditures, and types of products bought. In the result of P-value, it shows that the two variables are not significant.

Table 6. Significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on the effects of pandemic on their buying behavior and their consumer behavior

Consumer buying behavior	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
How many times you go to supermarket	-0.019	0.816	Not Significant
How much do you invest in buying necessities	0.117	0.154	Not Significant
What products do you stock most	-0.062	0.450	Not Significant

Note: Significant if p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers determined that most responders are female rather than male, and their ages range from 18 to 20 years old. The respondents like to travel to the store once a week or once a month to get the necessities, and they are prepared to spend P2,000 or more on items. During the pandemic, individuals preferred to buy food and beverages over health and beauty items. According to their expectations of how the pandemic would affect their purchasing behaviour, most business management students stock up on food and other needs. When respondents were classified by sex, age, and program, the researchers discovered no significant relationship between their impression of the consequences of the pandemic on their buying behaviour and their demographic profile. Furthermore, there is no significant relationship between respondents' assessments of the consequences of the pandemic on their buying behaviour and their consumer behaviour.

REFERENCES

- Arafat, S. Y., Kar, S. K., Menon, V., Kaliamoorthy, C., Mukherjee, S., Alradie-Mohamed, A., & Kabir, R. (2020). Panic buying: An insight from the content analysis of media reports during COVID-19 pandemic. *Neurology, Psychiatry and Brain Research*, 37, 100-103.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7365627/>
- Bonneux L., Van Damme W. (2006, March 30). An iatrogenic pandemic of panic. *BMJ*. 2006;332(7544):786–788.doi:10.1136/bmj.332.7544.786.
<https://www.bmj.com/content/332/7544/78>
- Forbes, Sharon L. 2017. Post-disaster consumption: analysis from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research* 27: 28–42
- Hendrix C., Brinkman H.J. (2013, June 17). Food insecurity and conflict dynamics. *Causal Link. Complex Feedbacks. Stab.* 2013;2(2):e26. doi: 10.5334/sta.bm.
<https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.bm/>
- Islam, T., Pitafi, H., Wang, Y., Aryaa, V., Mubarik, S., Akhater, N., & Xiaobei, L. (2020).

- Panic Buying in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Multi-Country Examination. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 102357. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969698920313655>
- Leatherby, L; Gelles, D. (2020, April 11). How the Virus Transformed the Way Americans Spend Their Money. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/11/business/economy/coronavirus-us-economy-spending>
<https://www.gssrr.org/index.php/JournalOfBasicAndApplied/article/view/11614/32>
- Li, Guangdi, and Erik De Clercq. 2020. Therapeutic options for the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery* 19: 149–50. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Meyer, Susan. (n.d). Understanding the COVID-19 Effect on Online Shopping Behavior. <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/covid-19-ecommerce/#understanding-panic-buying-and-coronavirus>
- Pietrangelo, A. (2020, October 22). Women Are Taking the COVID-19 Pandemic More Seriously Than Men. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/why-women-are-taking-the-covid-19-pandemic-more-seriously-than-men>
- Shou B., Xiong H., Shen. X.M. City University of Hong Kong: (2013). Consumer Panic Buying and Quota Policy under Supply Disruptions. Working paper. <http://personal.cb.cityu.edu.hk/biyishou/files/MSOMPanic.pdf>
- Silva, A.; Nayga, R.M., Jr.; Campbell, B.L.; Park, J.L. Revisiting cheap talk with new evidence from a field experiment. *J. Agric. Resour. Econ.* 2011, 36, 280–291. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227366612_Revisiting_Cheap_Talk_with_New_Evidence_from_Field_Experiment
- World Health Organization. (2020, November 8). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019?gclid=Cj0KCQiAwMP9BRCzARIsAPWTJ_FphI_w0HeJbVtdhYMxen8hkMYNxEYUnJHRa32DCtwYtrqS5CHp4aAjeIEALw_wcB