

A Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Consumer Behaviour: A Post-Pandemic Study After 5 Years

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically reshaped consumer behaviour across the globe. As the world emerges from the immediate effects of the crisis, it becomes increasingly important to examine the long-term shifts that have taken root. This study explores how consumer behaviour has evolved five years after the pandemic, highlighting changes in buying patterns, preferences, values, and expectations. From the acceleration of digital commerce to increased health consciousness and a shift toward ethical and sustainable consumption, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how deeply the pandemic has altered the modern consumer landscape. The study also investigates the implications of these changes for businesses, marketers, and policymakers, offering insights into how to adapt to the "new normal" of consumer behaviour.

Keywords: Pandemic, COVID-19 disease, Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 caused one of the most significant societal disruptions in recent memory. Lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing measures transformed how people interacted with one another and with businesses. The pandemic not only forced consumers to modify their daily routines but also accelerated trends that were already underway, such as e-commerce adoption, cashless payments, and remote working. Now, five years later, these adaptations have led to permanent changes in consumer behaviour. The modern consumer is more digitally savvy, health-conscious, environmentally aware, and value-driven than before. Traditional brand loyalty has weakened, and consumers are increasingly prioritizing convenience, trust, and transparency. The way products are researched, purchased, and reviewed has shifted significantly, creating a new paradigm for businesses to navigate. This study seeks to explore these lasting behavioural transformations, analyse the factors driving them, and provide a framework for understanding consumer priorities in a post-pandemic world.

SIGNIFICANCE

This study is important because it helps businesses understand how consumer behaviour has evolved five years after the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides insights into new consumer priorities such as health, convenience, sustainability, and digital engagement. Marketers and brand strategists can use the findings to better align their products and services with current consumer expectations. The research also supports

policymakers in creating regulations that reflect the changing needs and values of society. Ultimately, it contributes to the broader understanding of long-term behavioural change in a post-pandemic world.

SCOPE

This study focuses on analysing the long-term impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour over a five-year period (2020–2025). It examines key changes in how consumers shop, what they prioritize, and how they interact with brands. The research highlights areas such as digital adoption, health consciousness, sustainability, and shifting brand loyalty. It covers a broad consumer base, with an emphasis on urban populations and digitally connected markets. The study does not focus on specific industries but rather provides a general overview applicable to various consumer-driven sectors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Before the pandemic, consumer behaviour was influenced by factors such as pricing, product availability, branding, and social influence. While these elements remain relevant, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced new dimensions that continue to influence consumer decisions, including health safety, digital accessibility, supply chain reliability, and corporate social responsibility. The problem addressed in this study is the lack of in-depth understanding and documentation regarding how consumer behaviour has permanently changed in the five years following COVID-19. Although many studies have analysed short-term impacts during the crisis, there remains a gap in literature concerning the long-term shifts and their implications for marketing, retail, and consumer relations. Without a clear understanding of these changes, businesses risk falling out of touch with their customers, misaligning product offerings, and failing to innovate in response to evolving market expectations.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify and analyse the long-term changes in consumer behaviour that have emerged five years after the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To examine the sustained impact of digital transformation on shopping habits

METHODOLOGY

The article is conducted on the basis of primary data collected through online questionnaire from a population of different age category people from Changanassery Taluk.

POPULATION

The population of the article includes consumers of different age categories from the Taluk of Changanassery, Kerala.

SOURCES OF DATA

The article makes use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data required for the article are collected from samples using a structured questionnaire that was distributed in the form of Google Forms format. The secondary data were obtained from various websites, journals and blogs.

SAMPLING METHOD

Data were collected from respondents using non probabilistic method of sampling. Convenience sampling

method was applied by distributing the questionnaire among people of Changanassery Taluk who were easily reachable, to get the required data.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

H1: There is significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

TOOLS USED

For analysing the data, percentage method was used and interpretations were drawn accordingly. Chi-square test was used to test the hypotheses. The data collected were analysed with the help of SPSS software.

The following references were made for the research paper-

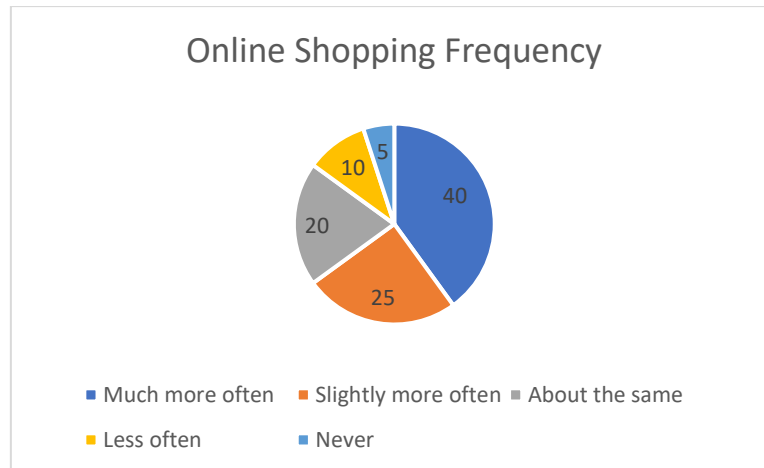
- Studies show that COVID-19 accelerated the shift to digital shopping, with many consumers relying on e-commerce during lockdowns. According to McKinsey (2021), this shift has continued even after restrictions were lifted, making online platforms a preferred choice for convenience and speed.
- Sheth, J. (2020) states that the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant disruption to consumer behaviour, with long-term shifts including increased savings, cautious spending, and a preference for essential goods. Research indicates that many consumers have adopted a more value-conscious mindset and are more selective in their purchasing decisions post-pandemic.
- Kim, R. Y. (2020) states that Post-pandemic consumer behaviour has become more hybrid—blending in-store and digital experiences. The “new normal” includes a strong focus on health, convenience, and trust in digital services. Studies show that habits formed during the pandemic, such as online grocery shopping and contactless payments, have become normalized.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1: Online Shopping Frequency

	Frequency	Percentage
Much more often	40	40.0%
Slightly more often	25	25.0%
About the same	20	20.0%
Less often	10	10.0%
Never	5	5.0%
Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

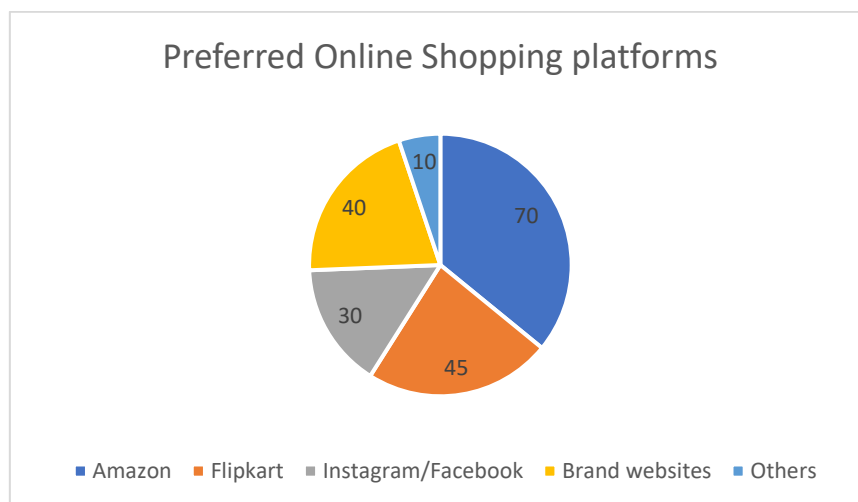


A majority (65%) of respondents reported shopping online more frequently than before COVID-19, indicating a significant shift toward digital purchasing habits.

Table 2: Preferred Online Shopping Platforms

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Amazon	70	70.0%
Jumia	45	45.0%
Instagram/Facebook	30	30.0%
Brand websites	40	40.0%
Others	10	10.0%
Total	100	100 %

Source: Primary Data



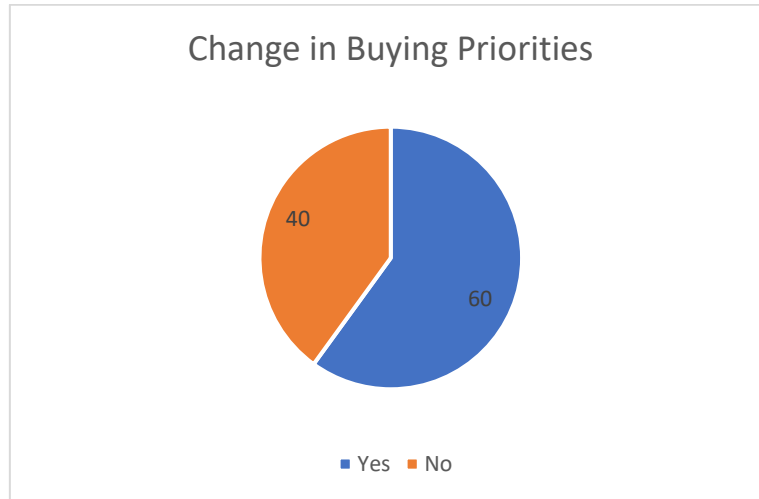
Amazon leads as the most preferred shopping platform.

Table 3: Change in Buying Priorities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	60	60.0%
No	40	40.0%

Total	100	100 %
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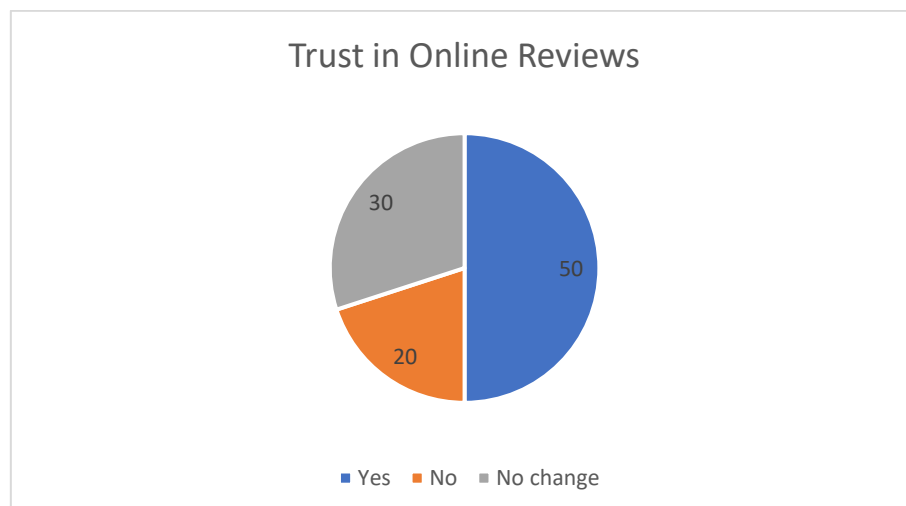
Source: Primary Data



A majority have altered their purchase priorities since the pandemic, suggesting a behavioural impact likely influenced by health, safety, or convenience concerns.

Table 4: Trust in Online Reviews

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	50.0%
No	20	20.0%
No change	30	30.0%
Total	100	100 %



Half of the respondents trust online reviews more now, possibly due to reduced in-store interactions and higher reliance on digital feedback.

Table 5: Preference of Online shopping over in-store shopping

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	75.0%

No	25	25.0%
Total	100	100 %

Source: Primary Data

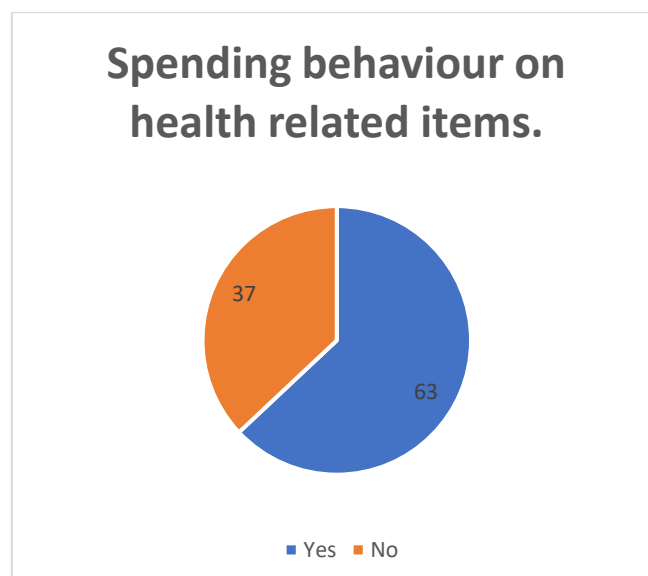


Majority respondents prefer online shopping over traditional in-store shopping after the pandemic, possibly due to convenience.

Table 6: Spending behaviour on health related items.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	63	63.0%
No	37	37.0%
Total	100	100 %

Source: Primary Data



Majority respondents increased their spending on health-related items (e.g., supplements, fitness equipment, wellness products) post-pandemic.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

H1: There is significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

In this study Chi square test was used for testing the hypothesis with 0.05 level of significance.

Association between COVID 19 pandemic & changes in consumer shopping preferences.

Pearson Chi- Square	Value	Degree of freedom	Sig.
	1.2904	6	0.040
Not significant			

Chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis and the result is given in above table. In this case, the p-value is 0.040, which is less than 0.05, so you reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

- A majority (65%) of respondents reported shopping online more frequently than before COVID-19, indicating a significant shift toward digital purchasing habits.
- Amazon leads as the most preferred shopping platform.
- A majority have altered their purchase priorities since the pandemic, suggesting a behavioural impact likely influenced by health, safety, or convenience concerns.
- Half of the respondents trust online reviews more now, possibly due to reduced in-store interactions and higher reliance on digital feedback.
- Majority respondents prefer online shopping over traditional in-store shopping after the pandemic, possibly due to convenience.
- Majority respondents increased their spending on health-related items (e.g., supplements, fitness equipment, wellness products) post-pandemic.
- There is a significant association between the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in consumer shopping preferences.

SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to lasting shifts in consumer behaviour, with a notable preference for online shopping and an increased focus on sustainability. Businesses should continue to invest in digital platforms and ensure that their offerings align with consumer values, particularly sustainability and ethical practices. Companies must enhance the online shopping experience by improving convenience, delivery options, and customer service. Furthermore, flexible payment methods, such as "buy now, pay later," should be incorporated to cater to changing financial priorities. Regularly monitoring consumer trends is essential to remain competitive and responsive to evolving preferences. Ultimately, brands that embrace these changes will be better positioned to thrive in the post-pandemic market.

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