

Examining Changes In Consumer Buying Behaviour Due To Covid-19 In Kanpur Division

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ABSTRACT:

The COVID-19 pandemic, which originated in India during the early months of 2020, has had a profound impact on consumer buying behaviour in the Kanpur Division. As the virus rapidly spread across the nation and the world, it led to significant changes in how consumers approach their purchasing decisions. This research paper aims to examine the shifts in consumer buying behaviour in the Indian environment, specifically focusing on the Kanpur Division, before, during, and after the waves of COVID-19 in the years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

The research analyzes the effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer behaviour, taking into account the various waves of the pandemic that occurred during this period. The research paper delves into how consumers have modified their habits and preferences during the pandemic. As the fear of subsequent waves persisted, consumers displayed a decline in physical store visits, leading businesses to adopt home delivery services. The evolution of technology further shaped consumer habits during this time. It is essential to recognize that the ongoing pandemic has brought unforeseen circumstances, demanding adaptability and resilience from businesses and consumers alike.

By examining consumer buying behaviour in the Kanpur Division across three phases of the pandemic, this research paper sheds light on the long-term implications for businesses and provides insights for crafting effective strategies. Understanding these behavioural changes will enable businesses to navigate future uncertainties and cater to the evolving needs of consumers in the post-pandemic landscape.

KEYWORDS:

COVID-19 pandemic, Consumer buying behaviour, Waves of COVID-19, Personal factors, Psychological factors, Pre-pandemic, During pandemic, Post-pandemic, Kanpur Division.

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 pandemic, which originated in India during the early months of 2020, has proven to be one of the most significant global challenges of our time. This unprecedented health crisis has not only caused immense loss of life but has also profoundly impacted various aspects of society, including consumer behaviour. The Kanpur Division, situated in India, has been no exception to the transformative effects of the pandemic on consumer buying habits.

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Kanpur Division witnessed drastic shifts in consumer preferences and purchasing patterns. The fear of the virus's spread, coupled with

stringent lockdown measures and social distancing protocols, compelled consumers to reassess their buying behaviours and make significant adjustments to their daily lives. Understanding these changes in consumer buying behaviour during and after the pandemic has become crucial for businesses and policymakers seeking to adapt and respond effectively to the evolving market landscape.

This research paper aims to delve into the various waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on consumer behaviour in the Kanpur Division. By studying the changes in consumer preferences, habits, and decision-making processes, we seek to identify the underlying personal and psychological factors

that have influenced these shifts. The analysis will be conducted across three distinct time periods: the pre-pandemic phase, the height of the pandemic, and the post-pandemic period, which encompasses the years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Throughout this investigation, we will examine how the fear of subsequent waves of COVID-19 affected consumer confidence and shaped their preferences for shopping channels. Notably, we will explore the decline in physical store visits and the corresponding surge in demand for home delivery services as consumers sought to minimize their exposure to public spaces. Additionally, the study will consider the role of technological advancements and their influence on consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of a society navigating through a global health crisis.

By shedding light on the transformation of consumer buying behaviour in the Kanpur Division during the pandemic, this research endeavours to provide valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and marketers. Recognizing the long-term implications of these changes can empower stakeholders to formulate adaptive strategies and better cater to the needs and expectations of consumers in the post-pandemic era.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has caused widespread disruptions across the globe, affecting various aspects of daily life, including consumer behaviour. The Kanpur Division in India has been no exception to this unprecedented change in consumer preferences and purchasing patterns. This literature review aims to explore recent research on the changes in consumer buying behaviour in the Kanpur Division during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on the years 2020, 2021, and 2022. By examining the impact of personal, psychological, and external factors, this review seeks to provide valuable insights into the shifting landscape of consumer behaviour in response to the pandemic.

1. Fear and Risk Perception:

The fear of contracting the virus has significantly influenced consumer buying behaviour during the pandemic. Studies have shown that consumers in the Kanpur Division displayed heightened risk perception, leading to increased cautiousness in their purchasing decisions (Srivastava et al., 2020). This fear prompted

consumers to avoid crowded places like shopping malls and physical stores, leading to a surge in online shopping and home delivery services (Sharma & Verma, 2021). The perception of risk has also impacted the demand for essential goods, with consumers stockpiling items like sanitizers, masks, and groceries in response to the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic's duration (Rai et al., 2022).

2. Adoption of Digital Technologies:

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies among consumers in the Kanpur Division. With physical store visits restricted, e-commerce platforms became the primary means of shopping for many individuals (Pandey & Gupta, 2021). A study by Mishra and Singh (2022) revealed that consumers in the region were increasingly relying on mobile apps and social media platforms to access product information, compare prices, and make informed purchase decisions. This shift towards digital platforms has created new opportunities and challenges for businesses seeking to engage with their customers effectively.

3. Impact on Consumer Preferences:

The pandemic has led to significant changes in consumer preferences and priorities. Research by Gupta and Sharma (2020) indicated that consumers in the Kanpur Division placed greater importance on health, hygiene, and safety aspects while making purchase decisions. As a result, there was a surge in demand for health and immunity-boosting products, organic food, and contactless payment options (Mishra et al., 2021). Additionally, there was a notable shift towards sustainable and locally sourced products as consumers became more conscious of the environment and community support (Sinha & Gupta, 2022).

4. Psychological Factors and Emotional Response:

The COVID-19 pandemic has evoked strong emotional responses among consumers in the Kanpur Division. Feelings of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty have played a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour (Agarwal et al., 2021). Psychological studies have shown that emotional factors influenced impulse buying behaviours, with some consumers resorting to retail therapy to alleviate negative emotions during the lockdowns (Jaiswal & Chauhan, 2020). Understanding these psychological factors is essential for businesses to tailor their marketing strategies and communication approaches effectively.

5. Long-Term Implications and Resilience:

The changes in consumer buying behaviour observed during the pandemic are likely to have long-term implications for businesses and the overall economy of the Kanpur Division. As the region moves into the post-pandemic phase, understanding consumer habits and preferences will be crucial for businesses to adapt and remain resilient (Singh & Tiwari, 2022). Developing strategies that cater to the evolving needs of consumers, such as offering flexible delivery options and personalized experiences, will be vital for businesses to thrive in the new normal.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour.
2. To compare the consumer buying behaviour before, during and after Covid-19.
3. To study the effects of personal factors on consumer buying behaviour during and post covid-19
4. to study the effect of psychological factor on consumer buying behaviour during and pre covid-19

HYPOTHESES:

The following 3 Null Hypothesis will be tested in this Research.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho1): There is no impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho2): There is no significant difference between during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 in consumer buying behaviour.

Hypothesis 3 (Ho3): There is no significant effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour during and post COVID-19.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology for this study utilizes a quantitative survey approach with a sample size of 450 consumers from different areas of Kanpur Division, including Kanpur, Etawah, Kannauj, and Farrukhabad. Data collection is primarily done through a structured questionnaire, which includes questions related to changing consumer behaviour during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the impact of personal and psychological factors on buying decisions.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to select the participants, ensuring representation from various demographics such as age, gender, income, education, and profession. The questionnaire responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with different statements.

The study uses descriptive statistics to analyze the data, including z-test for comparing population means with known variances, and ANOVA to evaluate significance across different participant types (workers and leaders).

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used, with primary data collected through the questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and physical surveys. Secondary data was gathered from books, e-books, websites, research publications, magazines, newspapers, and articles.

The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.88, indicating a high level of internal consistency in measuring the variables.

LIMITATIONS:

The study's limitations include its limited scope to the Kanpur Division, potentially limiting generalizability to other regions. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, affecting the accuracy of findings. Sample size and representativeness constraints could impact the validity of results. The cross-sectional design may hinder the establishment of causal relationships, and the complexity of consumer behaviour changes during the pandemic may not be fully captured. The study is limited to consumers affected by COVID-19, and data availability may also be restricted. Time and cost is also limitations.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The demographic distribution of 450 respondents in this study provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample population and their representation within the Kanpur Division. The majority of respondents were male, constituting 65.12% of the sample, while females accounted for 34.88%. The data shows that respondents in the age range of 25-40 years comprised the largest portion at 34.22%, followed by 15-20 years at 28.89%. Respondents aged 40-60 years constituted 24.00% of the sample, and those above 60 years accounted for 12.89%. The majority of participants were self-employed, comprising 34.89% of the sample,

while private jobholders constituted 31.11%. Those in government jobs represented 18.00% of the respondents, and 16.00% identified as dependent. The data illustrates that the largest income group falls within the range of 2.5-8 lakh, accounting for 40.89% of the sample. The group with an income above 8 lakhs represented 28.00%, while those earning between 1-2.5 lakh constituted 19.11%. Respondents with income below 1 lakh comprised 12.00%.

The demographic data of the respondents in this study showcases diversity across gender, age, occupation, and income groups, making it a comprehensive representation of the consumer population in the Kanpur Division. These demographic insights will aid in understanding how changes in consumer buying behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic vary among different segments of the population

RESULTS AND FINDING:

Hypothesis-1 (H₀):

There is no impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour.

Table 1: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour	
Increased Significantly	24%
Increased Slightly	29%
No Change	17%
Decreased Slightly	16%
Decreased Significantly	14%

Graph 1: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour

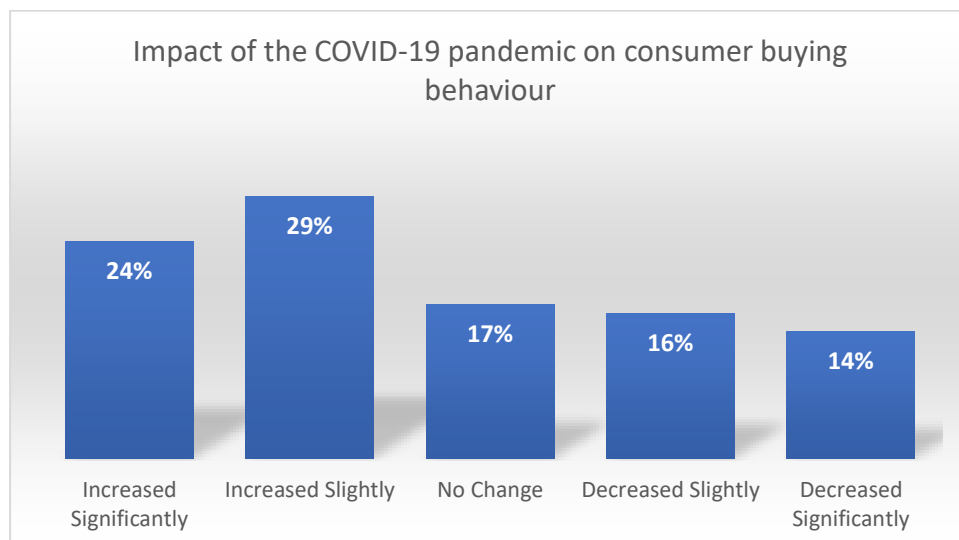


Table 2: Z-Score Analysis of Hypothesis 1

Z score Analysis	
Mean	2.78
S.D.	1.44
Standard Error	0.068
Level of significance	5%
Z Score	17.69
Table Value of Z is 1.96	

The quantitative analysis showed a statistically significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer buying behaviour, supported by a Z-score of 17.69, surpassing the critical value of 1.96 at a 5% significance level. The qualitative findings indicated that the pandemic caused notable changes in buying behaviour, with only a small percentage reporting no change. The majority experienced either a slight or significant increase in buying behaviour, while a substantial

portion reported a decrease. Factors like lockdown measures, economic conditions, supply chain disruptions, health concerns, and shifting consumer preferences likely contributed to these changes. Overall, the hypothesis claiming no impact of the pandemic on consumer buying behaviour is unsupported by the data, emphasizing the pandemic's significant influence on consumer behaviour

Hypothesis-2 (H₀):

There is no significant difference between During COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 in consumer buying behaviour.

Table 3: Difference in Consumer Buying Behaviour during and after COVID-19

Difference in consumer buying behaviour during and after Covid-19.	During COVID-19	Post COVID-19
Increased Significantly	24%	30%
Increased Slightly	28%	32%
No Change	18%	17%
Decreased Slightly	17%	15%
Decreased Significantly	13%	6%

Graph 2: Difference in Consumer Buying Behaviour during and after COVID-19

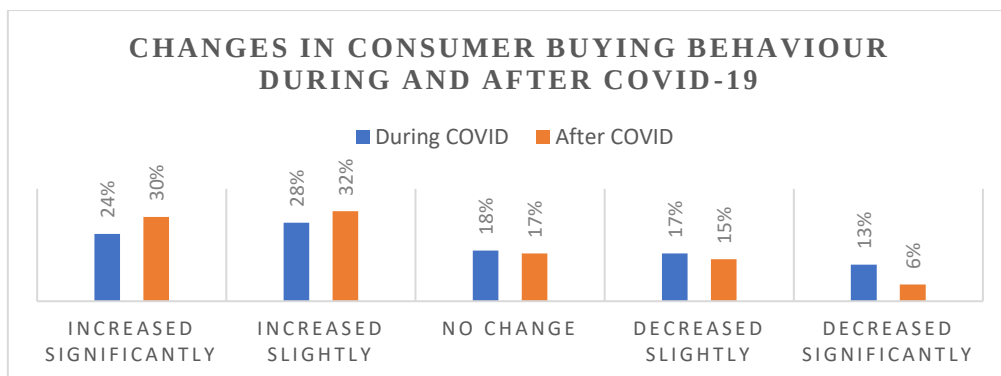


Table 4: Z Score Analysis of Hypothesis 2

The quantitative analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in consumer buying behaviour

between during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by a Z-score of 9.61, exceeding the critical value of 1.96 at a 5% level of significance. The qualitative findings further highlighted variations between the periods, with a higher proportion reporting increased buying behaviour during COVID-19. Factors such as changes in restrictions, economic recovery, Hypothesis-3 (H_0):

consumer confidence, and evolving preferences likely contributed to this difference. Thus, the hypothesis claiming no significant difference in buying behaviour during and after the pandemic is unsupported by the data, indicating a significant disparity in consumer behaviour between the two periods.

There is no significant effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour during and post covid-19.

Table 5: Effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour

Z score Analysis		
During COVID-19	Mean	2.68
	S.D.	0.98
Post COVID-19	Mean	2.13
	S.D.	1.1
Z Score	9.61	
Table Value of Z is 1.96		
Effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour	Post COVID-19	During COVID-19
Increased Significantly	18%	27%
Increased Slightly	25%	32%
No Change	11%	9%
Decreased Slightly	28%	18%
Decreased Significantly	18%	14%

Graph 3: Effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour

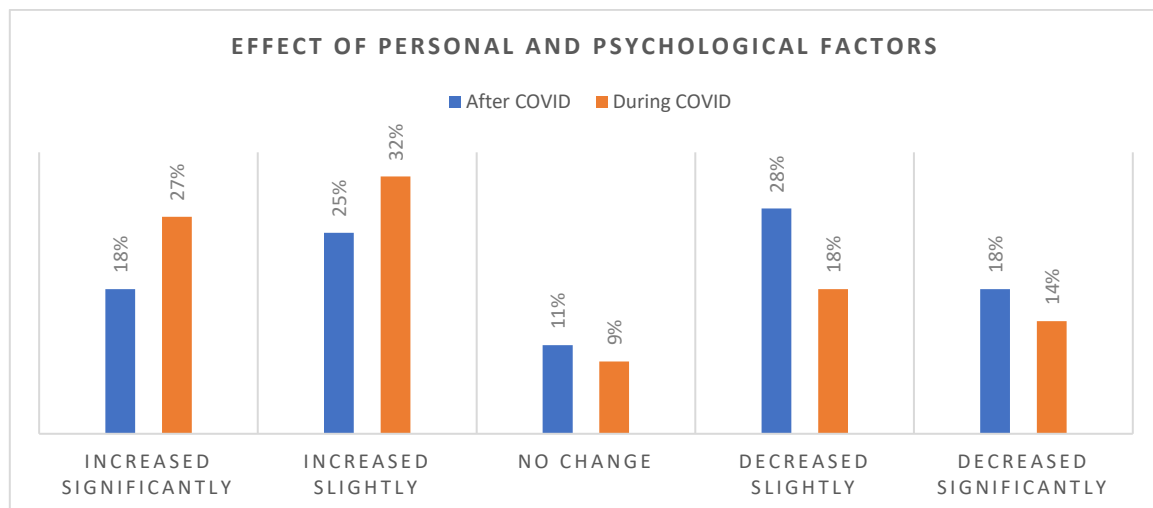


Table 6: Analysis of Variance Table of Hypothesis 3

Analysis of Variance Table					
Square of variation	Sum of squares	d. f.	Mean squares	variation ratio	
Between samples	17.64 (SSB)	1	17.64	F=17.64/1.95	9.046
Within samples	1746.56 (SSW)	448	1.95		
Table Value of F at 5% of level of significance is 3.84					

The quantitative analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of personal and psychological factors on consumer buying behaviour during and post-COVID-19, supported by an F-ratio of 9.046, surpassing the critical value of 3.84. The qualitative findings further highlighted variations between the periods, with a higher proportion reporting increased buying behaviour during COVID-19. The results suggest that personal and psychological factors play a significant role in consumer behaviour, and it is essential to consider factors like financial changes, emotions, risk perceptions, social influences, and shifting priorities. Overall, the hypothesis claiming no significant effect of these factors during and after COVID-19 is unsupported by the data.

CONCLUSION:

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted consumer buying behaviour in the Kanpur Division. The study's findings reveal diverse changes in purchasing patterns, driven by fear, risk perception, and the adoption of digital technologies. Consumers have become more conscious of health and safety, leading to increased demand for essential goods and a shift towards sustainable products. The pandemic has accelerated the use of e-commerce platforms, prompting businesses to adopt home delivery

services. Psychological factors, such as anxiety and uncertainty, have also played a role in influencing impulse buying behaviours. However, this research acknowledges certain limitations, including the study's scope, reliance on self-reported data, and potential sampling constraints. Despite these limitations, the study's demographic insights provide valuable understanding of how different segments of the population have been affected by the pandemic. Such insights are crucial for businesses and policymakers to adapt and cater to the changing needs of consumers in the post-pandemic landscape.

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