

Chapter 5

USING THEORY OF REASONED ACTION TO EXPLAIN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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INTRODUCTION

On 31st December 2019, World Health Organization reported cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, China, later declared to be caused by the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) (Saqlain et al., 2020). At the time of writing, COVID-19 had spread all around the world, accounted for 27.486.960 confirmed cases, and 894.983 deaths in 216 countries. Countries all around the world have taken various precautions like social distancing, closure of workplaces, to prevent the spread of the virus. Although COVID-19 crisis started as a health crisis, it caused an economic and sociological crisis. Since consumer behavior is a dynamic and influential, changing environmental factors find a response in consumer behavior quickly. There are several models and theories that could be used to explain consumer behavior. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the well-known and widely used theories to explain consumer behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) discussed that people form actions consciously before they decide to behave in a specific way. TRA has been recognized as a logical and valid way of presenting and predicting health behavior and used widely. Therefore, this study focuses on TRA in order to understand and explain changes in consumer behavior caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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CONCLUSION

In this study, a widely established behavioral theory called the theory of reasoned action is utilized to understand and predict consumer engagement specifically during and after COVID-19 pandemic. The theory of reasoned action suggests behavior is a function of the intention. As intention increases behavior tends to increase. The intention is influenced by attitude and subjective norm. Attitude is the degree to have positive/negative favor of a behavior. Subjective norm is the perception of what others think about one should or should not perform. This approval/disapproval of family, friends, or colleagues could be interpreted as a social input of the model and could be utilized to predict health-related behaviors. The theory of reasoned action posits that health-related behavior is the result of deliberation and planning (Molloy et al., 2019).

Attitude and purchase intention are consistent predictors of consumer behavior. Belief, which is a component of attitudes towards COVID-19, is harmful, difficult to handle and affects customer behavior when it comes to meeting needs (Widayat & Arifin, 2020). Also, strong evidence supports that social media disseminates healthcare information and has a capability of shifting perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes amongst the public (Habes et al., 2020). The theory of reasoned action could be regarded as an appropriate model to understand COVID-19 effected individual perceptions, attitudes, intentions, and behavior.

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