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EFFECT OF COVID -19 PANDEMIC ON THE CLOTHING CONSUMPTION OF FEMALE LECTURERS IN OYO STATE.

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Abstract

Consumers preference for clothing consumption in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic is critical for fashion brands and businesses to locate growth opportunities. This exploratory study intends to provide a picture of consumers' clothing consumption evolution while going through the pandemic crisis. Some viewpoints were considered to integrate the perspectives of life status and stress coping to responses to clothing consumption during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The objectives of the study were to study examined the effects in clothing consumption of female lecturers in the study area. The study adopted the changes that Covid- 19 pandemic has brought to the clothing Consumption of respondents in the study area. The research was a descriptive research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used, to represent subgroups of female lecturers in Oyo state College of Agriculture, Igboora. The sample size of the study was 306 respondents, who were drawn from a population of 1250. Questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions were hand given to the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Consumers prefer "waist-up" clothing and comfort over style. These improvised fashion clothing consumption practices may become new habits while going through the extended intermediated phase of the pandemic. Therefore, fashion business must match their offers with consumer offers. Furthermore, consumers are embracing online shopping channels, and the need to develop its infrastructure as a means to provide seamless online or omnichannel experiences.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, clothing, consumption.

Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have created devastating challenges for the fashion clothing industry. The pandemic lockdown and social distancing mandates have deeply disrupted consumers' daily lives and normal consumption. Consumers radically have shifted their demand for certain essential product categories and significantly have reduced their spending on nonessentials and discretionary purchases (Arora *et al.*, 2020; Knowles *et al.*, 2020). Clothing purchase remains a largely discretionary purchase, making it more susceptible to economic shocks caused by the pandemic. According to Census Bureau data released in mid-April 2020, clothing sales dropped by 50.5% (Callahan, 2020). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the fashion industry's economic profit, which is forecasted to drop by 93% in 2020 (McKinsey, 2020). As such, the pandemic has been particularly tough on the fashion and clothing industry. However, the pandemic crisis might also create opportunities for brands and businesses since it has produced rapid, sustained shifts in environments, markets, and consumers' needs and wants (Knowles *et al.*, 2020). Consumption is habitual (Sheth, 2020). Once routine in buying preference for a certain store or a particular brand is established, it becomes habitual and is difficult to change. In normal times, gaining consumers' attention and changing their preferences is a costly endeavor. However, when consumers go through daily life disruptions, they are more likely to change their consumption needs, wants, attitudes, and behavior, which leads to of new the



opening to new lifestyles and changes in consumption patterns and susceptible to intervention by marketers (Andreasen, 1984; Moschis, 2007). The global COVID-19 pandemic presents a timely opportunity to study consumer changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns, especially in clothing-specific lifestyle and consumptions, which could be utilitarianly and/or experientially oriented. Consumers might have practiced improvisations, and developed new spending patterns and consumption habits in clothing consumption (i.e., buying, having, using, and disposing of clothing products or related services) while going through the extended lockdown and slow reopening (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020; Sheth, 2020).

This study intends to provide a picture of the global COVID-19 pandemic effect on the clothing consumption and responses or changes in clothing consumption during the global COVID-19 pandemic of female lecturers in Oyo state. Therefore, the current study takes a viewpoint that integrates the perspectives of life status changes (Andreasen, 1984) and stress coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) to examine consumers' responses to clothing consumption during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Covid -19 pandemic on the Clothing Consumption on female lecturers in Oyo state College of Agriculture, Igboora. Specifically,

- i. the study examined the effects in clothing consumption of female lecturers in the study area.
- i. the study adopted the changes that Covid- 19 pandemic has brought to the clothing Consumption of respondents in the study area.

Research Questions

- ii. What are the effects of Covid 19 Pandemic in clothing Consumption of the respondents in the study area?
- iii. What are the changes that Covid- 19 pandemic has brought to the clothing Consumption of respondents in the study area?

Population of the study

The population of this study comprises of all female lecturers in Oyo state College of Agriculture, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Sampling Technique

Multistage and stratified random sampling technique was used. The sample size was proportionally selected on the basis of the number of respondents from each of the six institutions. A sample size of 306 was obtained.

Results

Table 1 : The effects of Covid 19 pandemic on the Clothing Consumption of female employees in Oyo State.

Effects	Number	%
Insufficient Capital	80	26
Comfort Clothing Styles	58	19
Overweight	65	21
Changing Patterns	40	13
Postpone spending's on new clothes	63	21
TOTAL	306	100

In Table 1, 80(26%) of the respondents indicated that Insufficient capital is one of the effects of brought by Covid 19, 58 (19%) of the respondents indicated that comfort clothing styles, 65(21%) of the respondents believed that the effect of covid 19 is overweight, 40(13%) of the respondents believed in changing patterns while 63(21%) of the respondents believed that Covid 19 brought postpone spendings on new clothes.

Table 2: Changes bought by Covid 19 Pandemic

Changes	SA	A	D	SD
Advertising of Products Online	27.8	48.9	14.4	8.9
Making Purchases through Social media Platforms	60.5	30.5	5.5	3.5
Buying of Quality Materials	56.3	28.6	6.3	8.8
Purchasing Fabrics that fits Body shape	35.6	45.4	15.5	3.5
Good/sufficient Funds	40.5	30.6	20.8	8.2

In Table 2 27.8% of the respondents strongly believed that covid- 19 has brought about advertising of more fashion products on line, 48.9% of the respondents agreed while 14.4% of the respondents disagreed and 8.9%of the respondents strongly disagreed.60.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that Covid 19 Pandemic has brought about more purchase of fashion products through social media,30.5% of the respondents agreed while 5.5% of the respondents disagreed and 3.5%of the respondents strongly disagreed. 56.3% of the respondents believed that Covid 19 has brought about the purchase of quality materials,28.6% of the respondents agreed while 6.3% of the respondents disagreed and 8.8% strongly disagreed. Also, 35.6% of the respondents strongly agreed the pandemic brought about purchasing of fabrics that fits body shape,45.4 agreed while 15.5 dis agreed and 3.5 strongly disagreed Lastly, 40.5 of the respondents believed the pandemic strongly agreed that the respondents should have sufficient funds in purchasing fashion products in order to buy quality materials, 30.6 agreed, 20.8 disagreed and 8.2%of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Conclusion

To cope with consumption strategy, consumers also improvised with different consumption adjustments to make consumption transitions, and eventually adapt to the new environment. Also, we found shifts in consumer mindset and attitudes toward clothing consumption. Consumers care about how brands are treating their employees and are willing to support local businesses. Moreover, the analysis on the changing patterns of the identified about clothing consumption over time provides evidence to support consumer changes in clothing consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, consumers' responses, adjustments, and changes in clothing consumption manifest the process of their coping with stress and disruption due to the pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis has

surfaced as a great research opportunity to understand consumer changes, resilience, and improvisation over time (Sheth, 2020). The findings revealed evidence that consumption change is the fundamental mechanism of stress coping. Also, clothing consumption is discretionary, and consumers service or postpone spending on clothing to reserve resources and gain control in an uncertain time. Clothing consumption may also function as a buffer for consumers to deal with stressful external environments. For instance, consumers switching to comfort clothing styles might be due to the need to feel relaxed or less stressed. Previous research found that crave products or services that provide comfort during a time of anxiety (Carver et al., 1989). Also, clothing consumption, which involves discretionary resources and individual creativity, provides a good setting to understand consumer resilience and creative consumption. Thus, future studies may find fruitful results from examining how fashion clothing consumption improvisation and adjustment are associated with consumers' coping resilience, lifestyle changes, and well-being. There are two managerial implications of the study. First, disrupted consumption is also linked to pent-up demand. As consumers cut or postpone spending on purchasing new fashion clothing, their needs for special clothing (e.g., school uniform, baby clothes, and maternity clothing) and desire to express themselves through fashion clothing consumption are deprived. The longer consumers are deprived of fashion clothing consumption, the stronger desires they will have for fashion clothing consumption. Once they do not have concerns over shopping, shipping, and virus on clothing, they have a desire for fashion clothing. When consumers feel anxious and cut or put off spending on fashion clothing, fashion businesses should work on keeping and improving relationships with customers by providing concern-free and convenient shopping, shipping, and returning services. A second managerial implication is that the fashion business must learn to adapt business operations to meet consumers' changing needs and wants. According to Lazarus and Folkman (2012), individual coping responses and actions associated with positive attitudes or emotional reactions last longer than those associated with negative attitudes. Based on our findings, fashion clothing business might consider going back to the fundamentals and identifying new values their customers are seeking. For instance, the shift to work from home has made consumers more pragmatic in fashion clothing consumption. Consumers pay more attention to "waist-up" clothing. Also, consumers prefer comfort over style. These improvised fashion clothing consumption practices may become new habits while going through the extended intermediated phase of the pandemic. Therefore, fashion business must match their offers with consumer demands. Furthermore, there is need to embrace more consumers more consumers shopping channels, and the development of fashion infrastructure to provide seamless online or omnichannel experiences.

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