

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PATRONAGE OF HOUSEHOLD CONSUMABLES IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

In an attempt to contain the spread of the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, the Federal Government put in place different measures among which was the restriction of movement in terms of lockdown and curfew as well as expert directives. This to a larger extent has not only affected the economic activities of the people in the communities by obstructing the existing and incoming potential buyers and suppliers of the household consumables that are necessary for their survival but also lower the patronage of the available household consumables across the globe. However, very few or none of the reviewed studies have investigated how COVID-19 protocols have affected the patronage of household consumables in Sokoto metropolis. Hence, this study, examines the effect of COVID-19 guidelines on patronage of household consumables in Sokoto metropolis. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study as primary data were obtained through the use of questionnaire from 384 respondents that were conveniently selected within Sokoto metropolis. The result of the statistical analysis through the use of multiple regression revealed that COVID-19 guidelines influenced the patronage of consumable goods (with  $R^2 = .664$  and  $P\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ ). It therefore concluded that COVID-19 guidelines have significant impact on customer patronage of consumable household in Sokoto metropolis. The study therefore recommended that customers should give equal level of adherence to all the guidelines set aside by the Nigerian Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) for both the supermarkets and markets. This is because when there is live there is hope.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Guidelines, Patronage, Household, Consumables,

## INTRODUCTION

The advent of Corona Virus disease towards the end part of 2019 in Wuhan has caused a lot of setback to the Nigerian's economy far beyond repair. Among these damages was the decline in the price of crude oil in the world oil market as a result of low demand for consumption of petroleum products throughout the world owing to restriction in movement and technological advancement. It has equally limited social gathering to the maximum of 20 people in any unavoidable occasion with limited hours of togetherness, reduces bank savings as people could not go out to save money into the bank at the same time, reduction in the investment level due to high risk of losses in both capital and return on the investment (Ozili, 2020). Owing to the aforementioned challenges accompanying the outbreak, government at all levels throughout the world and particularly in Nigeria devices various means to curtail the spread of the infectious diseases. Among these measures were expert advice (i.e., use of sanitizer, face masks, regular wash of hands, etc.), social distancing, curfew and lockdown.

In keeping to these measures, there occur none without side effects, particularly the lockdown, curfew as well as social distancing. In it, people find it difficult to move out as usual. This appears strange and gave them tough time to adjust and cater for their daily needs (daily necessities). With this, suppliers and sellers who have stock at hand to sell could not go to the market to sell. Hence, their products begin to spoil and this result in shortages and big losses. At the same time, the consumers who ran short of the daily necessities could not go to market to re-stock and the prices of other substitute product began to increase. This increases the possibility for scarcity of the products and the need to survive rises. As such, some wealthy individual begins to buy and share among their neighbors so as to safe the situation while on the side of the government there was a palliative across the country to all citizens. It is with the effort to address this situation that this study examines the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the patronage of household consumables in Sokoto metropolis.

In the same vein, academic researchers and business practitioners have also explored the effect of the pandemic on economy across the world. However, it was noted that most of these research efforts were not from Nigeria as some of the authors were from the

institutions in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Austria in Central Europe, and United Kingdom. Besides, the use of descriptive statistics was found to be maximally utilized in the analysis of effect. At the same time, they were mostly online based (for instance Arafat, Kar, Menon, Alradie-Mohamed, Mukherjee, Kaliamoorthy, & Kabir, 2020; Brandtner, Darbanian, Falatouri, & Udokwu, 2021, which correspond in line with their level of education development and technological awareness. Hence, it becomes the effort of this current study to investigate the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the household consumables in Sokoto metropolis.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Covid-19-Pandemic**

So many researchers have approached their discussions on COVID-19 pandemic from different angles. Some described its' nature or characteristics, history, mode of transmission, prevention and others. For instance, Alinia-Ahandani and Sheydaei (2020) argued that coronavirus gets its name from the way it looks under a microscope. In their idea, the word corona means "crown," and when examined critically, the round virus has a "crown" of proteins called peplomers coming out from its center in every direction. In their description, these proteins help the virus to identify whether it can infect its host or not. In relation to that, the condition known as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was also linked to a highly infectious coronavirus back in the early 2000s. However, the SARS virus has since been included in the family of coronavirus and has been found to be successfully remediable (WHO, 2020; NHB, 2020). Hence, the disease caused by the virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), is previously referred to as the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (CDC, 2020).

To others like Li, et al (2020), the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was officially known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 and it was detected in Wuhan at the end of 2019 in cases of unexplained pneumonia. Their article referred to the 2019-nCoV, as a new variety of coronavirus that has never been previously reported in humans. To them, the pandemic it caused was officially named novel coronavirus on February 8, 2020, in China while on February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization named the disease caused by

2019-nCoV as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Currently the number of patients with COVID-19 has rapidly increased, with 159,029,697 reported cases (Wordometer, 2020). The authors further stressed that the virus is transmitted mainly through infected respiratory droplets and on close contact with the infected person. Hence, it takes a period of as long as 2 weeks or more, and it is highly infectious. In their explanation, the organ targeted by the virus is lung. Therefore, patients with severe infection gradually develop respiratory failure, not only that they equally develop acute respiratory distress syndrome, multiple organ failure as well as death. Based on their suggestion, it is therefore important to identify, report, isolate, and treat individuals at the early stages of the disease to control its spread (Alinia-Ahandani & Sheydaei, 2020).

Basically, Alinia-Ahandani and Sheydaei (2020) have argued in their work that the preventive measures needed to curtail the probability of infection rate in locations with the outbreak are nearly the same with those of other coronaviruses experienced in the past. These include stay at home, avoid travel and public activities, washing of hands with soap and drinking of hot water often, practice good respiratory hygiene and avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands as well as social distancing which aims to reduce contact of infected persons with large groups by closing schools and workplaces, restricting travel and canceling mass gatherings. They further identified that the best way to prevent the spread of this virus was to avoid or limit contact with people who were showing symptoms of the virus and had traveled to China in the past 14 days (Li, & et al, 2020). However, this study adopted the COVID-19 guidelines specified by the NCDC (2020) for supermarket. This includes (i) ensure provision of hand disinfectants to all customers (ii) limit number of customers to allow physical distancing, (iii) reduce number of staff to allow physical distancing (iv) use non-medical facemask(v) temperature checks.

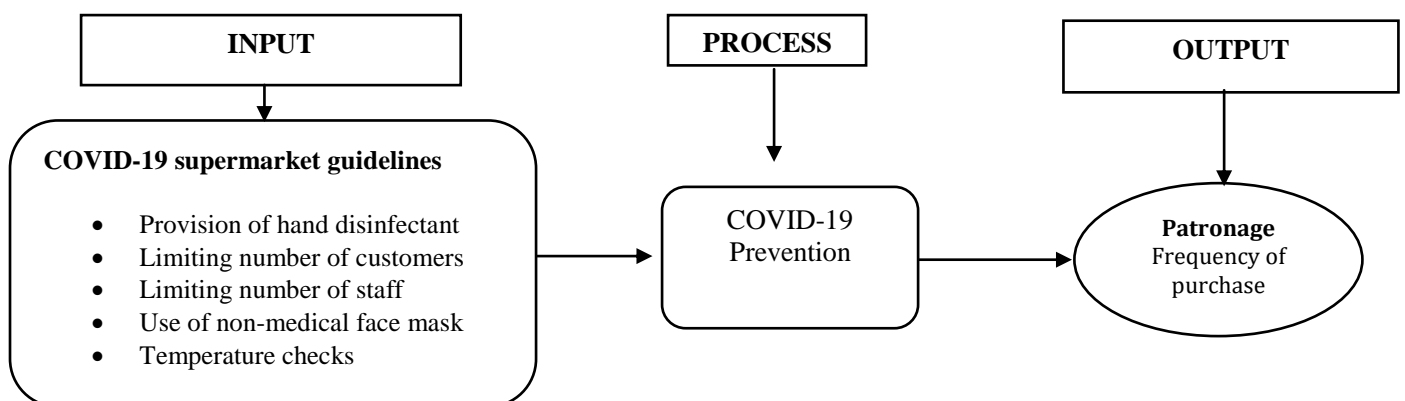
### **Customer Patronage**

Researches evidences have shown that quiet a number of authors have exemplified their submission on what customer patronage is. Among them were Nwulu and Asiegbu (2015), to whose patronage means “the material-help and encouragement given by a patron”. In this instance, patron suggests to mean a customer in an exchange transaction. In a similar

trend, Chukwudi and Marcus (2020) also described patronage as an exchange process where one receives a service or goods in exchange for money or other considerations. Customer patronage therefore is the purchase of goods and service from a vendor by a customer or a business. Apart from that, it could also mean the act of being a regular customer to a shop. Relating to the above, Kenneth, Miebaka and Ezirim (2015), described consumer as a person or thing that eats or uses something or an individual who buys goods and services for personal consumption. Hence, customer patronage can be inferred to mean the act of encouraging or promoting a store by buying regularly from it.

Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora, and Ekoja (2017) argued that consumers are individuals and households that buy firms' products for personal consumption. According to the authors, the consuming units are categorized into personal and organisational consumers. While they concluded that consumer behaviour is a set of activities in which these consumers undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing a product or service. In a similar trend, Nnabuko (1998) cited in Agbaeze, et al (2017), argued that a consumer is the final user of goods and services who are made up of all individuals and households, buying or acquiring goods and services for personal consumption and. Drawing from this, consumers are human in nature, and every human being cannot be totally predicted as they are changing organisms. Therefore, COVID-19 pandemic guidelines offered by NCDC (2020) stated earlier constitutes part of the stimulus that influence their response to patronage of consumable items in terms of frequency of purchase.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



The Figure above shows the existence of interrelationship among variables of the study. From this, one of the approved ways to curtail the spread of COVID-19 is to adhere to the specified guidelines for each sector by the government and this influences customer patronage in terms of frequency of purchase during COVID-19.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of need's theory

Katie (2021) described how Daniel Brannon used Maslow's hierarchy of needs and motivation theory (1953) to analyze human behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic since the theory comprises five tiers of human needs and motivations as shown in the diagram below.



Source: Katie (2021)

According to Katie(2021), the bottom levels of Maslow's hierarchy are physiological and safety needs which comprises basic like food, water, shelter and security in all areas of a person's life. Consumers are purchasing items that directly relate to those two areas. A good example of this was when Government was to declare the lock, people were enjoined to go to the market and buy some of their consumables as no one knows for how long it would

last. In this regard, the prices of the commodity went up and as people could only had to buy in order to guarantee their survival.

Adding further, consumers were purchasing toilet paper, hand sanitizer, medical masks and gloves as well as other items in bulk at the most basic level. In this regard, when another person goes to the store and sees that stock of certain items was diminishing more than other items, then the person is more likely to purchase those same items. Therefore, scarcity occurs as a result of bulk purchase. According to Katie (2021), reduction in the items on shelf in the store made them seem more valuable than they actually were. Hence, looking at what other people have bought and social influence actually predicts behaviors. However, these were temporary shortages as there were no issues with supply chain of manufacturers delivering such items to the stores. Hence, the real issue was the people who were buying items to stock up, not only for the next week, but for the next month or two while the retailers and suppliers were not prepared.

### **Empirical Review**

Researchers of different background and locations have worked on the related areas of the topic among which was Jyoti (2020) who in her article studied on how COVID-19 affected online grocery buying experiences with specific attention to selected cities in Mumbai and Pune in Indian by administering questionnaire through the use of google forms by circulating the link on social media to the customers whose age started from 15years and above and uses internet frequently for shopping online. Using random and convenience sampling techniques owing to suitability and availability of the respondents during the pandemic, the results of 103 returned responses presented through chart and bar diagram revealed that today's customers prefer buying their fashion and electronics as well as their monthly groceries online. Also, that the pandemic affected the businesses of online retailers to the extent that during the lockdown nothing was operational and post lockdown with the lack of resources like limited availability, inventory, transportation and delivery. The study equally observed on the side of the customers that services were not operational during the lockdown and with the start of unlockdown there were limitations in terms of variety and restricted deliveries. Despite that people were still terrified with the risk of COVID and the

safety measures taken by the retailers in packing and delivering the products. It was critically observed from the study that not all people whose age was 15 years and above that could use internet frequently do shop online, but all people whose age were 15 years and above had the need for what is sold at the grocery store during COVID-19. At the same time, the study neither stated a population nor method of sample selection as well as the use of inferential statistics.

In another development, Peterson (2020) in his article titled "COVID-19 pandemic and economic crises: the Nigerian experience and structural causes", analyzed COVID-19 spillovers to Nigeria's infrastructure. From the study, the author identified two ways in which the pandemic has affected the world; One, he pointed out that the spread of the virus encouraged social distancing which led to the shutdown of financial markets, corporate offices, businesses and events while the rate at which the virus was spreading, and the rate at which the bad situation could lead consumers buying attitudes to change. His study equally identified some of the ways in which COVID-19 has spilled-over into the Nigerian economy. Some of which were lowering borrowers' capacity to service loan, reduction in oil demand, supply shock in the global supply chain, reduction in the national budget as well as a reduction in the stock exchange market indices. The study also identified ways in which Central Bank of Nigeria provided support to the affected stakeholders. Some of which were not limited to granting extension to loan repayment, offering interest rate reduction, offering monetary targeted credit facility to the hospitality industries, regulatory forbearance to banks as well as strengthening the loan to deposit ratio which allows all banks to extend more credit to the economy. However, the study was more of report in nature rather than conceptual analysis.

Similarly, Arafat, et.al (2020) investigated the responsible factors for panic buying with specific attention to online media reports. From their article, 18 search engines used were divided equally into 3 investigators to search for the term, "Panic Buying", data were collected for 1 month (1 to 31, May, 2020) in Google form through blogs, personal view and news. The study adopted questionnaire for data collection through Zoom. The results of panic buying obtained from different countries were analyzed through frequency and



percentage, and further summarized using Word Cloud Analysis. It was found from the study that out of 784 media reports analyzed, the majority of the reports were found in Bing (18%), Ecosia (12.6%), Google (26.4%), and Yahoo (12.5%), while panic buying was reported in 93 countries. Among the 784 responses, a total of 171 reports did not explain factors responsible for panic buying. Therefore, the remaining 613 reports were analyzed to identify the same. The result of their study showed that scarcity contributed 75%, increased demand 66.07%, importance of the product 45.02%, anticipation of price hike 23.33%, as well as COVID-19 and other related factors (13.21%). While other reported factors were rumor, psychological factors (safety-seeking behavior, uncertainty, anxiety reduction, and taking control), social learning and lack of trust, government action, and past experience. From this study, inferential statistical tools were used to test the relationship that exists between and among the variables.

In a similar vein, Brandtner, et al (2021) investigated the impact of COVID-19 on customer end of retail supply chain with main focus on a big analysis of customer satisfaction. Their study evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on consumer satisfaction at the Point of Sale (POS) by focusing on 5 biggest retail chains in Austria. The study rated 533,000 consumer's satisfaction and 153,000 textual comments were analyzed using line graphs. The result of the analysis showed that there was a general and significant decline in customer satisfaction, also that store layout and facilities, product availability and waiting time had a great impact on customer satisfaction. Looking at the study, there was no use of inferential statistics but rather the line graphs and this reduce the value of the work.

### **Research Gaps**

The above review has exemplified the effort of researchers on the various effect of COVID-19 on the human endeavour. From this, existing works, it was noticed that most of the works were not from Nigeria as some of the authors were from the institutions in countries such as Bangladesh, Indian, Austria in Central Europe, and United Kingdom. It was equally noted that the use of descriptive statistics was maximally prioritized in the analysis of their works. At the same time, they were online based (for instance Arafat, et.al, 2020; Brandtner, et al, 2021), which correspond in line with their level of education development

and technological awareness. Hence, the effort to fill the aforementioned observed gaps led to this current study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design. This is because the study used primary data to generate the necessary information needed through structured and self-administered questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections of A and B. Section A covers Bio Data while section B addresses basic questions regarding COVID-19 guidelines (Independent variable) and Patronage of household consumables (Dependent variable). The independent variable was measured using five items (i.e., Provision of hand disinfectant, Limiting number of customers, Limiting number of staff, Use of non-medical face mask, and Temperature checks as identified in NCDC, 2020) where three questions each were raised from every of the determinants, as for dependent variable, frequency of purchase was used to measure the patronage of household consumables under which five questions were raised.

The research instruments reliability test gave a Cronbach Alpha coefficient result of 0.97 which was above the threshold of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally (1978). The scope of the study was limited to household consumables in Sokoto metropolis because house consumables were inevitable in our daily lives. The targeted population of the study is made up of the total number of the household within Sokoto metropolis. Out of 23 local government areas in Sokoto state, 4 of them constituting Sokoto metropolis were purposively selected. These are Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Wammako as well as Dange-Shuni with population of 314500, 266800, 242000, and 261100 household respectively. With this, the total population for the study becomes 1,084,400 as of the 2016 estimated population (City population, 2021). Subjecting this into the Macorr (2003) sample size determination formular, the sample size for the study becomes 384. Copies of questionnaire were administered proportionately and conveniently to the household in the respective location out of which 276(72%) were returned without error. The data collected were analyzed using multiple regression analysis via SPSS version 16.

**The model for hypothesis one is stated below:**

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y= Frequency of purchase;

$\beta$  = Coefficients of variables;

$X_1$ = Provision of hand disinfectant

$X_2$  = Limiting number of customers

$X_3$  = Limiting number of staff

$X_4$  = Use of non-medical face mask

$X_5$  = Temperature checks

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

**H<sub>0</sub>:** COVID-19 market guidelines have no significant influence on frequency of purchase

**Table1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815a	.664	.658	.88492

a. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of hand disinfectant, Limiting number of customers, Limiting number of staff, Use of non-medical face mask, Temperature checks

The table 1 above presents the model summary of the effect of COVID-19 guidelines on frequency of purchase. The table shows Correlation coefficient (R) and R-square to be 0.815 and 0.664 respectively. This explains that, COVID-19 guidelines are highly and positively related to frequency of purchase. Thus, its variables explained for about 66.4 % of the variations in frequency of purchase while the remaining 33.6% was explained by other factors not included in the model.

**Table 2: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.105	.141		.746	.457
	Provision of hand disinfectant	.428	.114	.427	3.762	.000

	Limiting number of customers	.620	.084	.576	7.394	.000
	Use of non-medical face mask	-.128	.148	-.120	-.866	.387
	Limiting number of staff	.234	.110	.248	2.131	.034
	Temperature checks	-.317	.143	-.285	-2.220	.027
a. Dependent Variable: Frequency of purchase						

The table 2 above shows the regression coefficient of the effect of COVID-19 guidelines on frequency of purchase where provision of hand disinfectant, limiting number of customers, limiting number of staff, as well as temperature check were statistically significant to frequency of purchase with p-value less than 0.05. On the other hand, use of non-medical face mask was statistically insignificant to frequency of purchase as its' probability value was greater than 0.05. With this, it is sufficed to say that COVID-19 guidelines have significant effect on frequency of purchase of household consumables at supermarket in Sokoto metropolis. Therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that COVID-19 guidelines have significant effect on frequency of purchase of house hold consumables is hereby accepted.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the result of the hypothesis tested, the finding revealed that the relationship between COVID-19 guidelines and frequency of purchase was significant. However, it was observed that the effect of the use of non-medical face mask on frequency of purchase amidst COVID -19 was negative with P-value  $\geq 0.05$  which implies that customers still find it easier to patronize supermarket to obtain their basic needs during COVID-19. Consequently, other variables; such as provision of hand disinfectant, limiting number of customers, limiting number of staff and temperature checks were positively significant to influencing frequency of purchase and eventual reduce customer patronage.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the finding discussed above, the effect of COVID-19 guidelines on frequency of purchase as a measure of customer patronage is obvious and its impact has significant effect on patronage as measured with frequency of purchase. With this finding, it is suffice to conclude that COVID-19 guidelines have effect on customer patronage in supermarkets located in Sokoto metropolis. However, this conclusion is in line with the findings of

Brandtner, et al (2021) who investigated the impact of COVID-19 on consumer satisfaction at the Point of Sale (POS) and found out a significant decline in customer satisfaction as affected by factors such as store layout and facilities, product availability and waiting time.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the conclusion drawn above, the study recommended that customers on one hand should always be careful not to always take laws into their hands by not wearing non-medicated face mask while searching for their consumables. This is because; a proper wear of facemask is beneficial as it prevents one from spreading the virus and at the same time attracting the diseases. Hence, the same level of adherence should be given to the use non-medicated face mask as compared to others. The study equally recommended that further studies should leverage on the limitation of this current study so as to come up with better findings in the future. At the same time, other effects of COVI-19 not factored by this study should be explored in the subsequent studies.

### **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study contributed to the research by connecting the effect of COVID-19 pandemic guidelines with patronage of household consumables in Sokoto metropolis. However, generalization of this study may be limited to factors such as the nature of data collected being cross-sectional, areas studied, market nature and sample taken. Therefore more conclusions may be obtained from a study with longitudinal research. Also, more findings may be generated from study that focus on other Local Government Areas of the State, as well as other areas of business.

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