Consumer Responses To Online Apparel Shopping During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract
This study investigates the key factors influencing online clothing shopping behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in Maharashtra. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected from a diverse sample of 500 respondents. The study focuses on the impact of product attributes, pricing, promotion, economic, technological, and political factors, as well as COVID-19-related concerns on consumer attitudes and intentions. Demographic variables, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are also explored to provide a comprehensive understanding of the online shopping landscape. The findings reveal that product quality, competitive pricing, and effective promotions significantly influence consumers' online clothing shopping behavior. The study highlights the importance of COVID-19-related concerns, including perceived severity and self-efficacy, in shaping consumer attitudes and intentions. Furthermore, demographic variables play a crucial role in understanding consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for tailored marketing strategies.

Keywords: Online shopping, COVID-19, consumer behavior, e-commerce, product attributes pricing, promotion, demographics, and subjective norms.

1. INTRODUCTION
Increased focus and attention in the fashion sector can be attributed to the consistently growing global fashion trade and associated companies (Ni, 2019). The global dress and garment market is worth $758.4 billion in 2018, up 7.5% from 2014. In addition, by 2022, its value is projected to increase by 11%, reaching $1182.9 billion (Mathers, 2021). The fashion industry has undergone shifts over time, leading to incredible success, as seen by the presence of labels that are consistently ranked among the top 100 brands in the world. Both essential and fashion products have contributed to the phenomenal growth of the fashion industry (Mavros, 2021). In the same way that fundamentals are effective in meeting the market's expectations, fashion items are a reaction to the newest thing on the market (Puttaiah, 2021, November 11). Zara and H&M are two major labels that have effectively responded to consumer needs and fashion trends (Radu, 2021, November 30). These companies became a driving force in the fast fashion industry, which in turn drove consumers to spend.
Population data may be linked to consumer churn. The Philippines is home to a large consumer market [7] due to its large population and growing middle class. Over the past decade, the Philippines has actively sought out and welcomed new fashion-related businesses to the nation. As seen by the success of related discount and retail initiatives, this factor was crucial to the company's eventual climb (Saunders, et. al, 2019). Consistent shopping centre expansion and openings may be directly attributed to Filipinos' attachment to shopping malls, which in turn benefits the retail business in the nation. Over the years, this has garnered enormous interest from foreign organisations expanding into the nation.

1.1. Online Shopping

Modern day purchasing has been completely transformed by online shopping. Consumers now have access to a vast array of goods because to the development of e-commerce platforms and the ease of the internet. Online shopping is appealing because it makes it easy for customers to purchase from the comfort of their homes without having to deal with traffic, lengthy lines, or congested stores. The internet marketplace offers a wide variety of options, frequently with competitive rates and frequent discounts, whether it be for food, niche goods, apparel, gadgets, or even groceries.

The simplicity of reading reviews and price comparisons is one of the main benefits of online buying. Before making a purchase, consumers can conduct complete product research by reading product descriptions, user reviews, and professional advice. Consumers are better equipped to make wise decisions with this knowledge, ensuring they receive the most for their money. In addition, the ease of online buying extends to the availability of a variety of payment alternatives, such as credit cards, digital wallets, and sometimes even cash on delivery, which facilitates and secures transactions.

Additionally, online shopping has broken down geographical barriers and given consumers access to goods and brands from all over the world. In addition to increasing consumer choice, the globalization of commerce has given small firms and artisans new ways to market to a global clientele. However, it's important to use caution when making purchases online because there are hazards that could arise from doing business online, including cybersecurity concerns, fraud, and problems with product quality and delivery. Overall, online shopping has altered the way we fulfil our purchasing demands by providing ease, variety, and accessibility. It has become an essential element of modern living.

Table 1: The table can be named "Key Aspects of Online Shopping."

Aspect	Description
Convenience	Shop anywhere, even from the convenience of your home.
Variety of Products	access to a large selection of products and brands
Price Comparison	Easy pricing comparisons lead to better offers.
Customer Reviews	Make informed decisions by reading product reviews.
Payment Options	a variety of payment options, including cards and wallets
Global Accessibility	Shop on websites and markets that are international.
24/7 Availability	Online shops are accessible 24/7.
Delivery Options	Pick from a range of delivery options and window of time
Return Policies	Many products have simple return and refund procedures.
Cybersecurity	Data breaches and online fraud risks
Product Quality	Potential issues with the items' quality
Shipping Times	Depending on the vendor and location, delivery timeframes can vary.
Customer Support	Customer service is available for questions and problems

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the factors influencing online clothing shopping behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in Maharashtra, including product attributes, price, place, and promotion.

2. To investigate the impact of economic, technological, and political factors on consumers' online clothing shopping behavior.

3. To assess the role of COVID-19-related concerns, such as perceived severity and self-efficacy, in shaping consumers' attitudes and intentions towards online clothing shopping.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Starting from the presentation of Covid, purchaser conduct has essentially changed because of limitations that separated family pay. Their buying conduct seems to have transformed from the very outset of the plague until a later period, particularly with regards to utilizing the web. As per **(Loxton et al., 2020),** during the beginning phases of the pandemic, buyer conduct reflected that saw in past critical shocks and brought about overcompensations to buys. In any case, research demonstrates that the time it takes to frame another propensity can change from 18 to 254 days, with a typical season of 66 days **(Mathers, 2021).** Because of the numerous deluges of this pandemic all through this crisis, purchasers are subsiding into new personal conduct standards for prominent timeframes, which makes sense of why customer conduct inescapably modified **(Puttaiah, 2021).** As per **(Akhtar et al. 2020),** because of government limitations and

worries about tainting, customers are uncertain about buying products from laid out stores in the later phases of the pandemic. Besides, **(Kirk and Rifkin, 2020)** make sense of that the continuous vulnerability ignited by the pestilence may ultimately prompt earth shattering use procedures. Individuals expected to assess their purchasing propensities and simultaneously distinguish advantages and administrations they had never utilized, as they were either incapable or reluctant to visit actual foundations. In particular, a few customers are moving to web based shopping since they favor the comfort and security of home conveyance, store pickup, and credit-just installments **(Koch et al., 2020).** As per a survey, individuals' buying ways of behaving have been affected by the pandemic, as seen by the critical expansion in web shopping **(Bricklayer et al., 2020).** Moreover, there were contrasts in the way of behaving of customers in Greece and China. For example, shoppers in China were anxious to attempt new brands and items rather than the past. Following the top, around 14% of individuals would rather not get back to the pre-crisis shop decision, and around 6% don't expect to do as such **(Huang et al., 2020).** Moreover, purchasers in Greece apparently was very restless about the circumstance that would emerge after the pandemic, which provoked them to purchase only fundamentals at the most reduced conceivable value and to disparage neighborhood organizations. Cost is the essential rule for 67% of shoppers' buys now, and 79% of them concur that it will keep on being the essential basis for buys during the following three years **(Mavros, 2021).**

Purchasers' physiology and mind science might be affected by crises. There are two methods for classifying what the circumstance has meant for customers: straightforwardly and by implication. It straightforwardly influences customer buying power since the Covid has expanded joblessness and brought thing substitution due down to a deficiency of stock. Since the indirect effect is connected to shopper discernment and feeling, human variables are for the most part liable for the abnormal impact **(Koos, 2017; Koos et al., 2017).** For instance, client conduct changes relying upon their future and day to day existing inclinations. This increments helplessness and rouses purchasers to develop new ways of behaving during the Covid time frame **(Koos, 2017). (Forbes, 2017)** caused to notice the chance of cultural movements for those encountering emergencies like prophetically catastrophic disasters and clinical issues. A more critical look uncovers the movements from a hopeless reality to difficult issues with regards to the Covid; for example, purchasers might encounter shocks, pressure, trouble, nervousness, and mental episodes **(Kennett-Hensel et al., 2012).** Moreover, **(Carver and White, 1994)** called attention to that eating avaricious food varieties could alleviate pressure in specific individuals. For instance, shoppers buy clothing for their kids and themselves on the web, regardless of whether they really need new garments.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
4.1. Research Approach
A quantitative research approach was utilized to gather data from a diverse sample of respondents in Maharashtra. This approach involved the distribution of structured surveys, ensuring that data collection was systematic and objective.

4.2. Collection OF Data
4.2.1.　Selection of sample
The target population for this study consisted of individuals residing in Maharashtra who engaged in online clothing shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic. A multi-stage stratified sampling method was employed to ensure a representative sample. Initially, different regions within Maharashtra were identified for stratification, including the Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha, Khandesh, Pune Metropolitan Region, Nagpur Metropolitan Region, Nashik Metropolitan Region, and Aurangabad Metropolitan Region. A proportional number of respondents were then randomly selected from each region based on its population size.

4.2.2.　Instrument of Data Collection
An exhaustive survey was contrived to gather information on client socioeconomics, concerns, and conduct during on the web piece of clothing buy all through the pestilence. The poll incorporates questions relating to progress in years, schooling level, conjugal status, work status, scope of month to month family pay, and district of home. Moreover, it involved components connecting with develops like item, cost, place, advancement, individuals, process, monetary, specialized, political, Coronavirus, saw seriousness, self-

adequacy, mentality, emotional standard, saw social control, and buy goal. These aspects were evaluated utilizing a Likert scale, with reactions going from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

4.2.3. Procedure of Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through an online survey distributed via various social media platforms and email. The survey was made accessible to potential respondents, and they were encouraged to participate voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured of data confidentiality. The survey was conducted during the pandemic to capture real-time data on consumer behavior and concerns.

### 4.3. Tools used for Data analysis

An exhaustive survey was contrived to gather information on client socioeconomics, concerns, and conduct during on the web piece of clothing buy all through the pestilence. The poll incorporates questions relating to progress in years, schooling level, conjugal status, work status, scope of month to month family pay, and district of home. Moreover, it involved components connecting with develops like item, cost, place, advancement, individuals, process, monetary, specialized, political, Coronavirus, saw seriousness, self-adequacy, mentality, emotional standard, saw social control, and buy goal. These aspects were evaluated utilizing a Likert scale, with reactions going from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTREPRETATION

500 respondents that expressed interest in clothing throughout the review are included in Table 2. Using an online poll sent among virtual entertainment places, the respondents were chosen to complete the accommodation inspection process. The review was placed in a public area on Facebook. In order to boost the number of respondents, the survey was made available from December 2020 to February 2021 and promoted as a status update and in several Facebook groups.

Table 2: Demographic variables

Category		N	%
Age	15–30	300	60%
	30-60	150	30%
	60 & Above	50	10%
Qualification	High school	75	20%
	Vocational	50	10%
	University/college	300	70%
	Graduate school	75	10%
Marital status	Married	150	30%
	Unmarried	350	70%
Employment status	Employed	300	60%
	Unemployed	200	40%
Range of monthly family income	Below 30,000	300	60%
	30,000-50,000	150	30%
	50,000 Above	50	10%
Region	Konkan,	250	50%
	Western Maharashtra	100	20%
	Marathwada	25	5%
	Vidarbha	25	5%
	Khandesh	50	10%
	Pune Metropolitan Region	30	6%
	Nagpur Metropolitan Region	10	2%
	Nashik Metropolitan Region	5	1%
	Aurangabad Metropolitan Region	5	1%
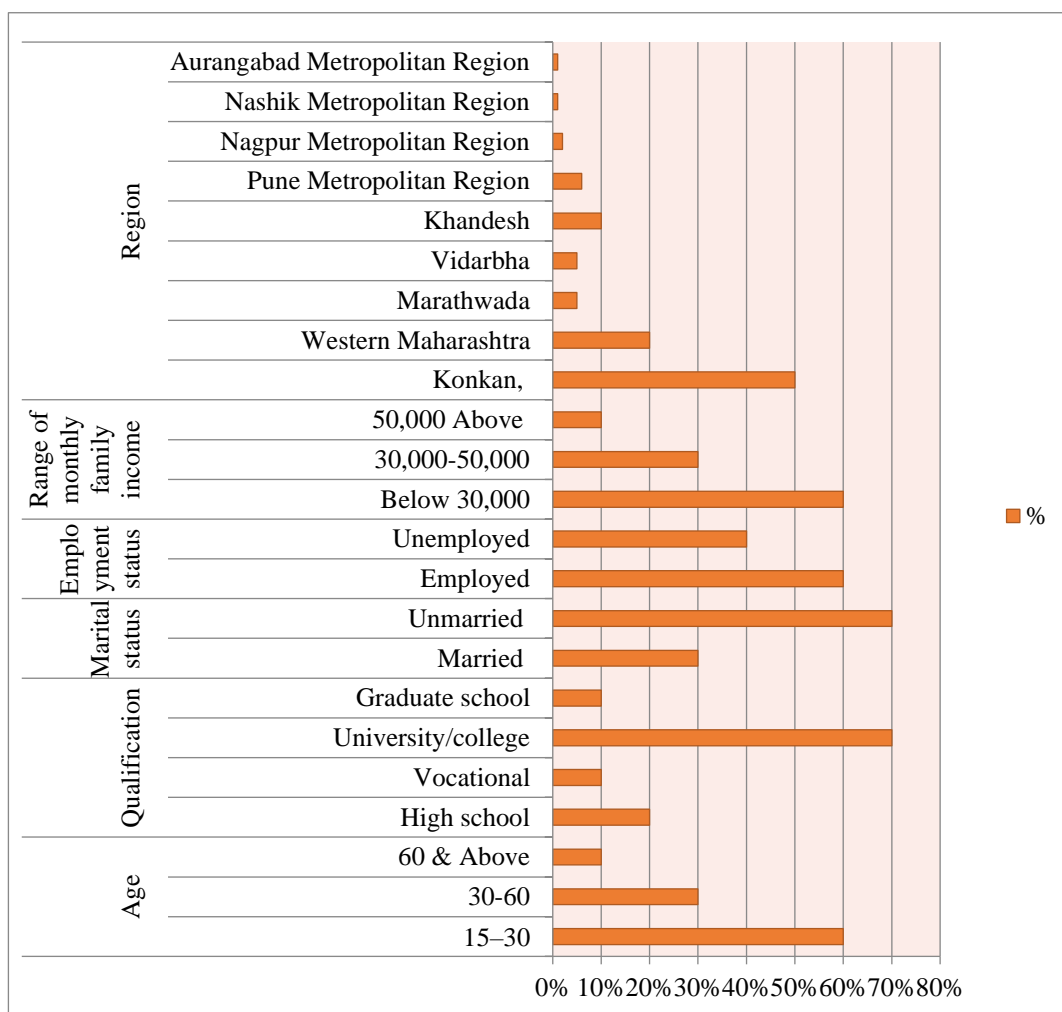
Figure 1: Demographic variables

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic variables of the study's participants. The data is categorized across various aspects, including age, qualification, marital status, employment status, range of monthly family income, and region. In terms of age distribution, a significant proportion of the respondents, approximately 60%, fall within the 15 to 30 age range, while 30% belong to the 30-60 age group, and the remaining 10% are aged 60 and above. This indicates a relatively young study population. In the context of educational qualification, the majority of participants, around 70%, have completed university or college education. Approximately 20% have high school qualifications, and 10% have graduated from vocational or graduate schools. Regarding marital status, 70% of the participants are unmarried, while 30% are married. This distribution showcases a diverse representation of individuals with varying family responsibilities. In terms of employment status, 60% of the participants are employed, while 40% are unemployed. This indicates a fairly balanced representation of both working and non-working individuals in the sample. The data also includes the range of monthly family income, where 60% of the respondents have a monthly family income below 30,000, 30% fall within the 30,000-50,000 range, and 10% have an income of 50,000 and above. This distribution provides insights into the economic diversity of the study population.

5.1. Structural Equation Model
The final and underlying insights of the component stacking are shown in Table 2. Using the concepts of and Hair, it was possible to upgrade the model attack of the review by removing developments with esteems below 0.5 and non-huge inert (p-VALUE 0.05).

Table 3: statistics that describe the constructs

Variable	Item	Mean	StD	Factor Loading	
				Initial	Final
Product	MM1	4.35	1.128	1.416	-
	MM2	5.42	1.711	1.471	-
	MM3	4.67	1.885	1.298	-
	MM4	5.28	1.854	1.338	-
Price	MM5	5.42	1.589	1.224	-
	MM6	5.23	1.885	1.235	-
	MM7	4.73	2.123	1.348	-
Place	MM8	5.23	1.831	1.235	-
	MM9	2.51	1.821	1.332	-
	MM10	3.61	2.446	1.143	-
	MM11	3.52	1.262	1.245	-
	MM12	4.54	1.372	1.378	-
Promotion	MM13	4.84	1.827	1.455	1.675
	MM14	4.18	1.264	1.421	1.762
	MM15	4.74	1.112	1.452	1.799
	MM16	5.22	1.821	1.537	1.612
	MM17	5.57	1.838	1.414	1.598
People	MM18	4.22	1.778	1.455	1.624
	MM19	4.58	1.899	1.473	1.614
	MM20	5.27	1.967	1.425	1.614
Process	MM21	5.35	1.725	1.411	1.575
	MM22	5.35	1.756	1.423	1.668
	MM23	5.11	1.982	1.461	1.627
	MM24	5.34	1.863	1.481	1.552
Economic	MFA1	5.58	1.627	1.482	-
	MFA2	4.63	1.156	1.485	-
	MFA3	4.86	1.257	1.474	-
	MFA4	4.78	1.244	1.477	-
	MFA5	3.28	1.172	-1.267	-
Technological	MFA6	3.68	1.252	1.641	-
	MFA7	4.37	1.321	1.661	-
	MFA8	4.56	1.214	1.528	-
Political	MFA9	5.28	1.124	1.724	-
	MFA10	5.24	1.162	1.734	-
	MFA11	4.73	1.378	1.436	-
COVID-19	PMT1	5.78	1.418	1.731	1.751
	PMT2	5.98	1.522	1.751	1.752
	PMT3	5.77	1.543	1.711	1.711
	PMT4	3.75	1.264	1.732	1.728
Perceived severity	PMT5	3.81	1.246	1.622	1.652
	PMT6	5.25	1.178	1.255	-
	PMT7	3.72	1.235	1.521	1.823
Self-efficacy	PMT8	5.23	1.835	1.326	-
	PMT9	3.73	1.351	1.551	1.837
	PMT10	5.58	1.745	1.852	1.845
Attitude	TPB1	4.53	1.843	1.752	1.746
	TPB2	4.21	1.863	1.851	1.652
	TPB3	4.55	1.812	1.742	1.744
Subjective norm	TPB4	4.61	1.258	1.425	1.625
	TPB5	3.52	1.263	1.763	1.653
	TPB6	4.47	1.246	1.425	1.617
Perceived behavioural control	TPB7	4.64	1.146	1.535	1.524
	TPB8	4.86	1.812	1.678	1.689
	TPB9	5.51	1.875	1.471	1.613
Purchasing intention	TPB10	4.27	1.244	1.727	1.732
	TPB11	4.52	1.248	1.677	1.676
	TPB12	4.38	1.226	1.665	1.664
	TPB13	4.57	1.242	1.517	-

Table 3 displays the builds' dependability. Hair's theory states that if the attributes are more than 0.5, normal difference separated (AVE) will be regarded as acceptable. Additionally, the composite stability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha should both be greater than 0.70. With that, it is extremely possible to see that all builds displayed interior legality and consistency.

Table 4: combined dependability

Factor	Cronbach's α	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability
Promotion	1.838	1.616	1.925
People	1.854	1.612	1.924
Process	1.831	1.616	1.915
COVID-19	1.983	1.792	1.984
Perceived severity	1.713	1.636	1.814
Self-efficacy	1.818	1.662	1.821
Attitude	1.688	1.672	1.914
Subjective norm	1.824	1.632	1.856
PBC	1.813	1.622	1.848
Purchasing intention	1.953	1.742	1.926
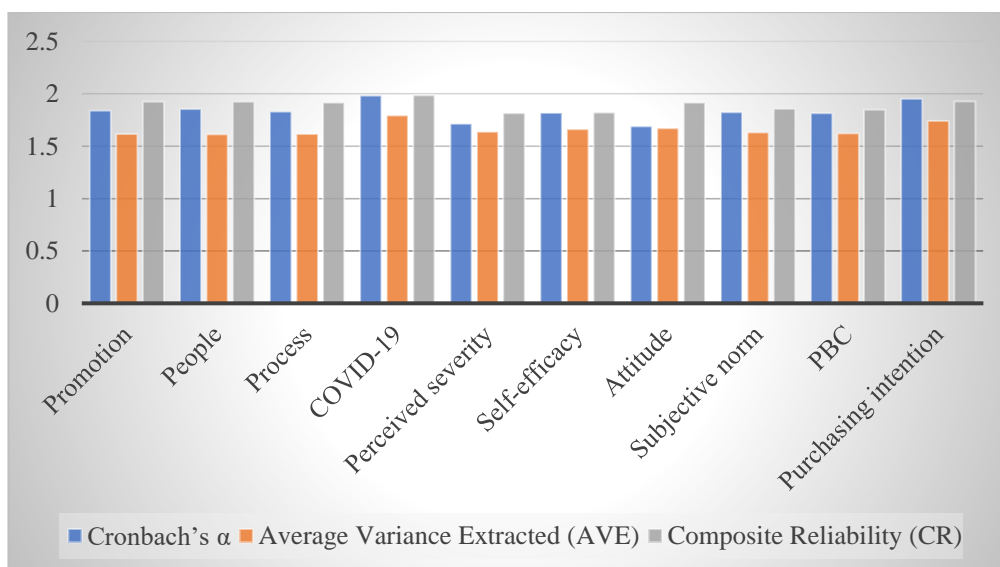
Figure 2: Graphical representation of combined dependability

The model investigation is shown in Table 4. The results may very well show that purchase expectations (PI) were strongly impacted by abstract standard (SN). This demonstrates that even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers frequently purchase what they require. People will carry on with their daily lives and even adopt a favourable attitude toward shopping if they take protective steps, such as wearing a facial covering and abiding by customs. Strangely, PBC did not value monetary, inventive, or political factors. The findings indicated that PBC was the main component really motivating the purchase of clothing, and that self-adequacy was the highest contributing variable.

Table 5: Path statistics

No	Variable	Direct Effect	p-Value	Indirect Effect	p-Value	Total Effect	p-Value
1	SN→PI	1425	1.123	-	-	1.623	1.123
2	PI→AP	1.467	1.128	-	-	1.578	1.128
3	MM→A	1.461	1.115	-	-	1.461	1.115
4	COV→SE	1.454	1.121	-	-	1.454	1.121
5	COV→PS	1.415	1.116	-	-	1.415	1.116
6	MM→PBC	1.388	1.123	-	-	1.388	1.123
7	PBC→PI	1.178	1.141	-	-	1.178	1.141
8	SE→A	-1.131	1.158	-	-	-1.131	1.158

9	MM→PI	-	-	1.523	1.113	1.523	1.113
10	MM→AP	-	-	1.335	1.113	1.335	1.113
11	PBC→AP	-	-	1.157	1.137	1.157	1.137
12	SN→AP	-	-	1.361	1.123	1.361	1.123

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The research study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing online clothing shopping behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in Maharashtra. The findings highlight the significance of product attributes, pricing, promotional strategies, economic, technological, and political factors, as well as COVID-19-related concerns in shaping consumer attitudes and intentions. The study also underscores the role of demographic variables, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in understanding and predicting consumer behavior. Online clothing retailers in Maharashtra can use these insights to refine their strategies, enhance safety measures, and better tailor their marketing efforts to specific consumer segments. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to shape consumer behavior, ongoing data analysis and adaptability are crucial for online retailers to thrive in the evolving e-commerce landscape. This research contributes to our understanding of consumer behavior and provides a foundation for further studies and practical applications in the field of online retail.

Recommendations:

• Online Retailers in Maharashtra: Online clothing retailers in Maharashtra should pay close attention to the factors that influence consumer behavior, such as product quality, pricing, and promotional strategies. They should continue to offer high-quality products, competitive prices, and effective promotions to attract and retain customers.

• COVID-19 Preparedness: Given the significance of COVID-19-related concerns in influencing consumer attitudes and intentions, online retailers should continue to prioritize safety measures. This includes clear communication of safety protocols, contactless delivery options, and easy return processes to alleviate consumer concerns.

• Demographic Targeting: Understanding the role of demographic variables is crucial for marketing strategies. Retailers can tailor their marketing efforts based on the demographic profiles of their target audience. For example, consider offering different promotions or product recommendations for different age groups or income brackets.

• Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control: Retailers should consider strategies to influence subjective norms and increase perceived behavioral control. Encouraging positive word-of-mouth and providing excellent customer service can enhance the influence of subjective norms, while simplifying the purchasing process can increase perceived behavioral control.

• Ongoing Data Analysis: The study demonstrates the importance of ongoing data analysis in understanding consumer behavior. Retailers should continue to collect and analyze data to stay responsive to changing consumer preferences and concerns.

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