**PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**COURSE TITLE:**

**COURSE CODE:**

**INSTRUCTOR NAME:**

**STUDENT NAME:**

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**RESEARCH TOPIC: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

# **INTRODUCTION**

Online shopping involves the method of acquiring services, goods, and additional commodities straight from a vendor via the web, with no need of a middleman. Consumers can explore web sellers from the convenience of their personal residences and purchase virtually by sitting in front of a computer screen (C.K.SUNITHA, 2014).

## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Amidst the pandemic, online shopping served as an important service; completely altering the manner in which consumers interacted with merchants. Increased epidemic had led to conventional businesses being closed or performing with restrictions, e-commerce served as sufficient development for clients as immense populace shifted to online websites for various commodities. Such a transition has immense impact on customer conduct i.e. there has been enhanced awareness of digital shopping encounters, modifications in delivery options as well as huge acceptance of online payment modes. This feasibility, safety along with accessibility of digital shopping has left a huge impact, but there have been doubts whether in post-pandemic setting, these routines would persist or revert to previous norms.

## **1.2 RATIONALE**

Assessing consumer behaviour post-epidemic is essential for businesses which depends fully on digital shopping modes. Having knowledge of how mannerism has evolved is important for companies to make modifications towards strategies & take care of customer demands in context of altering market. After the pandemic, problems like over-confidence in online sites, desire for hybrid purchasing methods as well as wariness regarding data privacies may re-define e-commerce. Those firms that sufficiently assess such patterns could position themselves within a competitive marketplace, enhanced customer loyalties & commitment. In addition, assessing whether specific amidst pandemic era practices like virtual shopping on constant basis or bulk purchases would serve as assistant in creating sufficient marketing & operational approaches.

## **1.3 SECTIONS SUMMARY**

Our proposal will start with literature studies which assesses the current situation of covid-19 impact on online purchases and studies consumer conduct. The next section will incorporate research questions and objectives which address the present issue here i.e. how the customer behaviour has changed post pandemic; it will also explore specific study objectives. The next sections include research methodology for which secondary source method has been chosen. Then certain ethical problems like privacies & permissions in collection of data would be discussed. At last, a time-scale using Gantt graph would provide strict routine for all project phases.

# **INITIAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Covid-19 epidemic has huge influence on client behaviour, specifically when considering the online buying trend. Several studies have developed that e-commerce’s enhanced amidst lockdowns as consumers were in search of more secure & convenient ways of purchasing commodities. For instance, (Naveen Donthu, 2020) has shown that retail’s rapid digital transition, as many consumers shifted to digital purchasing for fulfilling their daily demands. Also, (Kraus, 2022) states that the COVID-19 epidemic has contributed to this phenomenon of Digital Transformation. The digital revolution (DT) has transformed beyond a technology potential to an essential requirement to handle the growing needs and demands of the globe's growing population.

(Ali Ismajli, 2022) assessment has focused on the integration of advanced technologies, with digital websites constituting an intrinsic section of customer’s way of living. (Pantano, 2021) has reported that during the covid-19 pandemic, online shopping enhanced beyond the requirements leading to more purchases of more luxurious products. Such an expansion of online shopping shows the manner in which pandemic has not only modified purchasing ways, but also what individuals deemed important.

In addition, (Julia Koch, 2020) has evaluated the alterations in consumer trustfulness, pointing out that elevated digitization of retail sectors has produced worries regarding digital safety as well as privacies. Customer dependability on digital sites has grown a lot recently, also their trust in dependability & safety has been tested specifically in times of data thefts or poor consumer services.

(Roggeveen, 2020) has stated that client demands have been shifted putting a strong emphasis on elevated requirements for quick and dependable delivery ways as well as seamless digital experiences. Companies unable to take care of these basic requirements are at risk of reduced client loyalties, putting a strong emphasis that covid-19 has enhanced customer standards contentment within e-commerce. The author also states that the epidemic has created an alternate financial reality. Globally, businesses are contracting as losses in employment grow. Following the loss of employment, consumption decreases, causing other businesses to go under as well as additional individuals lose their employment. merchants who provide value-driven products, as well as cheap sellers, are projected to benefit under that situation, especially during current economic turmoil, but prestige and premium retailers would most certainly struggle. Marketers have to comprehend what clients deem needed as opposed to what they regard to be optional. It is imperative that such unnecessary or expensive retailers retain to grow their names and engage their clients digitally.

## **2.1 IDENTIFIED GAPS**

The previous literatures have provided important information into the epidemic’s rapid implications on online purchasing habits, there have been gaps in comprehending how such patterns would shift after the pandemic. One identified gap is if the huge dependency on online purchases would continue after the epidemic ends. As per (Rashmi Gujrati, 2023), another study was required for long term sustainability of such cognitive modifications. The research shows that whilst numerous clients are becoming more acclimated to the feasibility of digital purchases, many are coming back to traditional shopping methods for particular products & encounters one the restrictions have been diminished.

(Debadyuti Das, 2022) has identified a gap pertaining to significance of consumer trust related to post epidemic e-commerce. Even though trust had served as essential factor amidst the covid-19 pandemic, specifically considering data security & delivery dependence; there is uncertainty wether the trust would modify as clients are growing as more critical as well as selective regarding the online sites they interact with. In addition, (Beckers, 2023) has put focus on the importance of assessing how “hybrid purchasing model” where clients can transition between digital or physical networks, impacts the client behaviour within post-pandemic time period. The gap discussed shows that future research should focus on dynamic linkage among online/physical busying methods.

## **2.2 JUSTIFICATION**

The gaps discussed above state that there needs to be more studies on post-pandemic client behavior.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Behaviour Permanencies** | Firstly, although there have been numerous studies regarding how the epidemic has shaped purchasing mode, there have been many long-term implications in existence too. (Kraus, 2022) has stated that companies have to predict whether the clients would continue utilizing e-commerce or go back to conventional shops for specific type of purchases. Our research will add to this topic by identifying what habits would remain and the manner in which companies need to adjust their strategies. |
| **Evolution of Trust** | Also, there needs to be some research regarding how client trustworthiness in online sites has altered post epidemic. (Julia Koch, 2020) has identified that epidemic has put emphasis on flaws in digital securities, also there is uncertainty wether clients would continue their trustfulness in e-commerce websites as much as they had done during covid-19 times. Our research would address this gap by identifying how trust may influence post-epidemic purchasing decisions, specifically pertaining to data privacies and reliance of digital stores. |
| **Hybrid Interests** | (Beckers, 2023) has made observations regarding the swiftness of digital adoption, but it is important to gain comprehension of how fast the transition may affect long-term client choices. Would clients abide by their online purchasing choices or would they want a blend of both online/physical encounter? Our study will provide answer for this problem by identifying how clients view the hybrid shopping framework as well as the manner in which it impacts their overall purchasing activity. |

***TABLE 01***

# **RESEARCH PROBLEM, QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES**

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The Covid-19 epidemic has led to significant shifts in customer buying patterns where many individuals have preferred digital platforms for feasibility & safety. Nevertheless, as our world has made adjustments to life post epidemic, it is not clear if such modifications would remain permanent. Although online purchases have been on the rise significantly during Covid, it is still not certain if the trend would continue or if clients will go back to conventional purchasing methods.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

How has client behaviour concerning online shopping evolved after the global epidemic and what factors may influence customer trust in online buying after the epidemic?

## **3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

* To assess post epidemic modifications in customer purchasing patterns.
* To identify major determinants of client trustfulness in digital buying frameworks.
* To assess the impact of data security and privacy issues on post epidemic wed purchasing activities.
* To identify the implications of hybrid shopping frameworks (digital/physical) on client choices.

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The project would adopt a descriptive research technique for identifying consumer demands pertaining to online purchases post epidemic. The objective is to assess how buying choices, confidence within online platforms as well as client choices may alter as response to epidemic. We have decided to utilize secondary data approach as per the scale & nature of our identifications. Utilizing these secondary sources would enable an extensive and in-depth identification of already present information, providing major insights into the patterns with no limitations linked to real data acquisition.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

Secondary data comprises data acquired from a source apart from the original participant. It signifies that the material has been released to the public & is being analyzed. Secondary data sources include magazines, books, newspapers, and periodicals. It might be either publicly available or private information. Our research will utilize secondary sources of data. Some sources are discussed as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Academic Journals** | The Peer-reviewed research publications 7 journals would offer substantial information and present insightfulness into post-epidemic client behaviour, putting a specific focus on digital purchasing trends, trust challenges as well as hybrid frameworks. |
| **Government Publications** | Data for the implications of covd-19 on client demands & e-commerce expansion along with regulatory or trust issues in connection to data securities would be taken via governmental & global organizational publications (For instance, the OECD, UK Office for National Statistics and WEF (World Economic Forum)). |
| **Retail Data** | The information from major e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Shopify along with industry groups like internet retailers would provide significant insights on how client behaviour may evolve when it comes to item categories, buying frequencies as well as alternate choices. |
| **Literature Reviews** | Already present research on client demands and digital buying would be used to establish a strong basis for present study. This would help in identifying any consistent trends & patterns which might be in existence prior to or amidst the epidemic, these would then be compared to after the pandemic time period. |

***TABLE 02***

There are numerous advantages to secondary data sets listed below:

* Generally, inexpensively priced.
* Easily reachable
* Offers preliminary data that helps clarify and improve subjects of study.
* Improves depth of expertise
* Displays numerous examples of investigation methodologies.
* May indicate inadequacies in study and possibly identify areas of concern.
* Might contain a wide variety of data.
* Permits you to discover competing and supportive viewpoints for the research subject.
* Identifies the important academics and study that is currently being done in the relevant field.
* Allows keep your investigation of the issue in proportion (Teesside University, 2024).

## **DATA ANALYSIS METHOD**

The secondary data-set collected would be assessed by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches as per the nature of data. The two-stage technique would be utilized:

### **4.3.1 Quantitative Data Assessment**

The statistical information from various industry sources would be assessed for detection of major trends within client purchasing habits as well as trustfulness after the epidemic. The may incorporate modifications in purchasing style, popular item categories as well as the regularity with which individuals may buy something online. Quantitative data like percentile changes in client trust or e-commerce sales would be displayed over charts and tables to give a transparent visual image of motion in client conduct. A comparative study would be done to assess the pre pandemic, amidst pandemic and post-pandemic time. This may assist in establishing wether internet purchasing options enhanced in-between epidemic is likely to persist.

### **4.3.2 Qualitative Data Assessment**

Thematic analysis constitutes one of among the most prevalent types of examination in qualitative studies (K, 2023). It concentrates on finding, assessing, and comprehending variations in significance underlying qualitative data. The thematic analysis from literature reviews, official reports would be taken. Major areas including customer trust, data securities, privacy issues as well as the effect of hybrid shopping technique would be assessed and evaluated. The strategy would give an improved comprehension of the factors affecting client decision-making and their confidence in digital platforms. Also, thematic analysis would be utilized for examining client perspectives towards hybrid shopping frameworks online/offline as well as the consequences for companies.

# **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While performing research on client demands for online purchasing services amidst the epidemic, different ethical considerations have to be addressed to make sure regarding study’s integrity as well as the preservation of individual’s rights. We have discussed essential ethical problems along with strategies to tackle them.

* 1. **Privacy & Confidentiality**

Privacy concerns are paramount when considering secondary data, specifically if it incorporates sensitive or personal data. Protection of individual identities as well as accurate data information is important.

**Strategy:** Anonymizing data may result in avoidance of direct or indirect individual identification. The data would be sufficiently kept with blocked accessibility for maintaining confidentiality. All published information would aggregate data in a manner that guarantees privacy. Making compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) would serve as priority, making sure that each data handling procedures are satisfying legal criterion for privacies & data safeguarding.

* 1. **Informed Approval**

Even though secondary data may not entail direct interactions with people, ethical research may require transparencies regarding data utilization as well as acquiring consent from original source of data if deemed relevant.

**Strategy:** To acquire secondary data, make sure that original data was obtained with full consent & ethical problems in mind. Proper checking would be done regarding utilized data sources like retail data, governmental publications as well as academic journals; they are following proper ethical data gathering. Any specific data requiring any further consent would be taken care of in accordance to ethical study norms.

* 1. **Avoiding Bias**

Researcher’s bias may influence data interpretations as well as the legitimacy of findings. It is important to be impartial amidst the research process.

**Strategy:** We would employ triangulation (a strict scientific technique) for cross-checking information from different sources. This would entail assessing findings from extensive secondary sources of data for verification that interpretations are well-supported and have not been impacted by a sole source. For reducing biasness, the study would be performed as per the identified academic guidelines & peer-review methods.

* 1. **Ethical Adoption of Secondary Data**

Main requirement for this is alignment with study objectives & respectfulness for original participant’s liberties.

**Strategy:** The ethical principles would be assessed firstly then followed by the secondary sources of data for ensuring that they are as per ethical standards. For protection of intellectual property & promoting transparency, every data source would be properly acknowledged & referenced. If data restrictions arise they would be reported so that our research setting is fully comprehended.

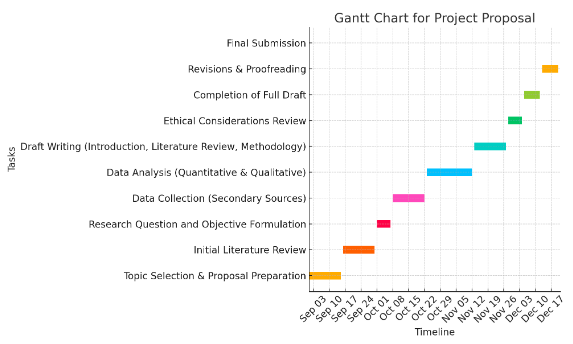
* 1. **Misusage of Findings**

The findings could impact client conduct or company procedures. It is imperative to assess the manner in which results would be adopted as well as they are offered on ethical basis.

Strategy: We would report results in an equitable & impartial manner, eliminating overgeneralization as well as facts distortion. Suggestions have to be on basis of evidence and given with sufficient cautions for preventing misleading stakeholders. The study would make contributions positively to our comprehension of client behaviour whilst not assisting any specific economic goals.

# **TIMESCALE**

The time scale below will demonstrate the phases and milestones of this study project. Every phase is created for guaranteeing that the project would be finished in a specific time while remaining methodical & disciplined. We have created a Gantt chart for the timescale.



The chart has demonstrated that our project would be completed in a period of three months. In first month of September, the research topic would be carefully selected. Afterwards a research question, problem and objective is formulated in third week of September. Data collection i.e. secondary method adopted is identified in first week of October and the next section of data analysis which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data-sets would be used planned out and incorporated in second and third week of October. Draft is established which includes our major sections like literature reviews, introduction and methodology. After a draft is made, careful observation is done regarding ethical considerations in end of November. Our full draft is established, reviewed & proofread. Then, the final submission would be done in mid of December.

# **CONCLUSION**

It has been concluded that the study’s main focus is providing insights into the changing client behaviour towards digital purchasing amidst the epidemic, putting strong emphasis on trustfulness, data securities as well as the integration of hybrid shopping frameworks. The epidemic has sufficiently affected client interactions with internet sites, offering both difficulties & chances for firms. The study would fill information gaps by screening out present literature and adopting secondary data to identify the manner in which post epidemic behaviour might persist or adapt. Our research would add more knowledge by recognizing major aspects which impact digital purchasing choices, trustfulness as well as chance of hybrid shopping techniques.

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