COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH?

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the world the way we know it and has its impacts can be extended to the consumer domain. Therefore, this paper aims to systematically review the literature available concerning the COVID-19 pandemic in the consumer domain. We conducted a systematic literature review with 21 papers from the Scopus database that discussed the impacts of this crisis on consumer behavior. We answered the following questions: What topics are being explored by the literature? What issues did COVID-19 bring to consumers' lives? How will the COVID-19 affect consumer behavior? How to respond to the consequences that this pandemic is bringing? What are the future topics that need an investigation from the literature?. The results show how consumers are reacting to the crisis by adopting panic behavior and stocking basic products. To reduce physical distancing and psychological stress, consumers are using more technology and do-it-yourself activities. Companies are addressing those issues by limiting consumption and communicating to the customers the actions that they are taking, which for the customers are fundamental. The changes provoked some challenges in retail and there is a need to increase the use of agile methods to reduce time and add more value to those customers at this time. Finally, we present implications of those results both in the research and managerial perspective and some topics that need to be further addressed in the future.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic; Consumer Research; Literature Review;

Introduction

First detected in the city of Wuhan in China in December 2020, the coronavirus spread quickly and was thus declared a global pandemic in March 2020. The disease caused by the previously unknown virus is called COVID-19. To reduce the contamination risks, countries have been taking robust policies of quarantine and social distancing. Therefore, the business had to close its doors and only essential services were allowed to open.

The consequences of this disease have constantly been investigated regarding its effect on the body, on mental health, and in the economy. One sphere where this pandemic has a great impact and that needs to be addressed is in consumption (c.f Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Kim (2020) points out that the effects of digital transformation on productivity and organizations have been and are sources of much research and discussion. However, the virus's influence on consumers and consumer culture has received relatively limited attention. Consumers have been limited in the activities that were once common in their lives and the socialization in the marketplace has been reduced to the internet.

Therefore, this pandemic not only put the consumer in a vulnerable position regarding health, but also in the economy. Moreover, projections have shown how this pandemic can increase poverty globally and put a setback in years of progress (Sumner, Hoy, & Ortiz-Juarez, 2020).

Consumer research has fundamental concerns that can help in those challenging times. Issues of poverty and consumer vulnerability have been fundamental in the Transformative Consumer Research, and the research can foster the development of public policies to help in those sensitive times. Consumer Culture Theory has been showing how social and cultural

aspects can shape consumers' decisions and those new times threat the rites of the consumers and the previous consumption patterns that were already well-established.

Furthermore, those changes in consumer behavior in times that challenge the individual's wellbeing both in the health and economic sphere, it is fundamental that consumer researchers identify the adversities challenges that this pandemic is bringing to consumer's life and discuss solutions to help to improve those consumer's wellbeing. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to systematically review the literature available concerning the COVID-19 pandemic in the consumer domain. Despite the novelty of the topic, some research is already being published and it is relevant to systematically summarize those results to better present to the relevant stakeholders and to help in triggering more discussions to improve consumer's wellbeing.

To achieve the goal, we propose the following questions to better understand the literature available:

1) What topics are being explored by the literature?
2) What issues did COVID-19 bring to consumers' lives?
3) How will the COVID-19 affect consumer behavior?
4) How to respond to the consequences that this pandemic is bringing?
5) What are the future topics that need an investigation from the literature?

Despite the new topic, the available research can provide useful insights into our understanding of consumer research in these times. Moreover, this paper will help consumer researchers and practitioners generally to identify what has been found concerning the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic to consumer research. The topic is new and a summarization of the results available will help to guide the discussions and to present the findings in an aggregated way. We hope the findings of this paper help to trigger more dialogue on the current and future effects that this health crisis is imposing on the life of consumers.

Method

To achieve the goal of the paper we conducted a systematic literature review following the guidelines from the specialized literature (Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003; Briner & Denyer, 2012; Snyder, 2019). This method was chosen given the opportunities to provide evidence-based answers and the findings to establish public and managerial policies. Thus, the literature review can provide an attempt to integrate these studies systematically, helping scholars, managers, and policymakers in their decision process about the topic in question.

Planning the Review

To conduct the systematic literature review we chose the Scopus database of abstract and citation because it gives an overview of a myriad of science fields and provides extensive and complete information (Jia, Zhou & Allaway, 2018). We applied the keywords "COVID-19 OR Coronavirus" AND "Consumer*" in the search engine. The purpose of those words was to extract all the papers that discussed issues concerning the consumer in the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we defined as exclusion criteria the type of the document, including only articles and reviews, once they have undergone a peer review to assess its suitability, and language. Only papers written in English were added, as a way of access international research and the impacts that could be discussed globally. Figure 1 shows the research questions of this systematic literature review and the information we will collect from those papers to answer them.

Table 1.

Research Questions

Research Question	Purpose of The Question	Information Collected
What topics are being explored by the literature?	To identify what issues regarding this pandemic and consumer behavior are being explored by the literature	Title, Abstract, Research Goal and Findings
What issues did COVID-19 bring to consumers' lives?	To detect what problems the pandemic brought to consumer's life	Research Goal, Findings and Discussions
How will the COVID-19 affect consumer behavior?	To identify how the pandemic is changing the consumer behavior	Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions
How to respond to the consequences that this pandemic is bringing?	To identify how consumer behavior and research will be different in the future because of the pandemic	Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions
What are the future topics that need an investigation from the literature?	To identify the recommendations of the authors to new topics that need to be urgently addressed	Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions

Conducting the Review

Table 2 shows the process of data extraction. We included all the papers published until June 17th. The initial search resulted in a total of 72 papers. We then proceeded to the exclusion criteria. Selecting only articles and review, 61 papers were found and those were also written in English, therefore, resulting in 61 papers.

Table 2.

Search Process

Database	Scopus
Initial Search	72
Article + Review	61
Papers out of the scope	38
Final Database	21

To proceed to the data analysis, we first did a screening of all the 61 to identify the ones that were out of the scope of our research and excluded from further analysis. Firstly, the initial screening showed that 8 papers were published before 2019 and were then excluded since they did not reflect the current issues and the new discussions. Secondly, an analysis of title, abstract, and keywords was performed to assess whether the paper addressed the issues discussed in this research, 32 were excluded, resulting in 21 papers.

Data Analysis

To analyze the papers found, we performed a content analysis. The papers were read fully and their relevant information were collected to answer the research questions proposed in the paper. To give an overview of the literature, we also performed a keywords network analysis, and we present the journals that published those papers, which can be a platform for future research regarding those issues.

Main Journals

Our sample of papers was published in 14 different journals. Table 1 shows these journals in descending order based on the number of published articles. The "*Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics"* covers the largest number of papers, this explains the predominance of a study dedicated to understanding the impacts on the consumption of agricultural foods. The *"Journal of Business Research"* is a journal that seeks to promote business research, processes, and commercial activities. The *"International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology"* seeks to publish research related to technology and its applications, a theme present in the new consumption and negotiation model between companies and customers. It is noted that health journals also raise discussions on the subject under analysis, for example, the *"International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health"* with two publications, is an interdisciplinary journal of environmental sciences and engineering, health public health, environmental health, economic health research, and global health. Also, other magazines are focused on the area of sustainable development, tourism, global politics, and the international political economy.

Table 3.
Main Journals

Journal	Number of Papers	Impact Factor
Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics	4	0,83
Journal of Business Research	3	4,02
International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology	2	0,41
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2	2,46
BMJ Global Health	1	0,74
Clinical and Translational Oncology	1	2,37
Environment, Development, and Sustainability	1	1,93
Globalizations	1	1,67
IEEE Engineering Management Review	1	0,39
Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery	1	2,57

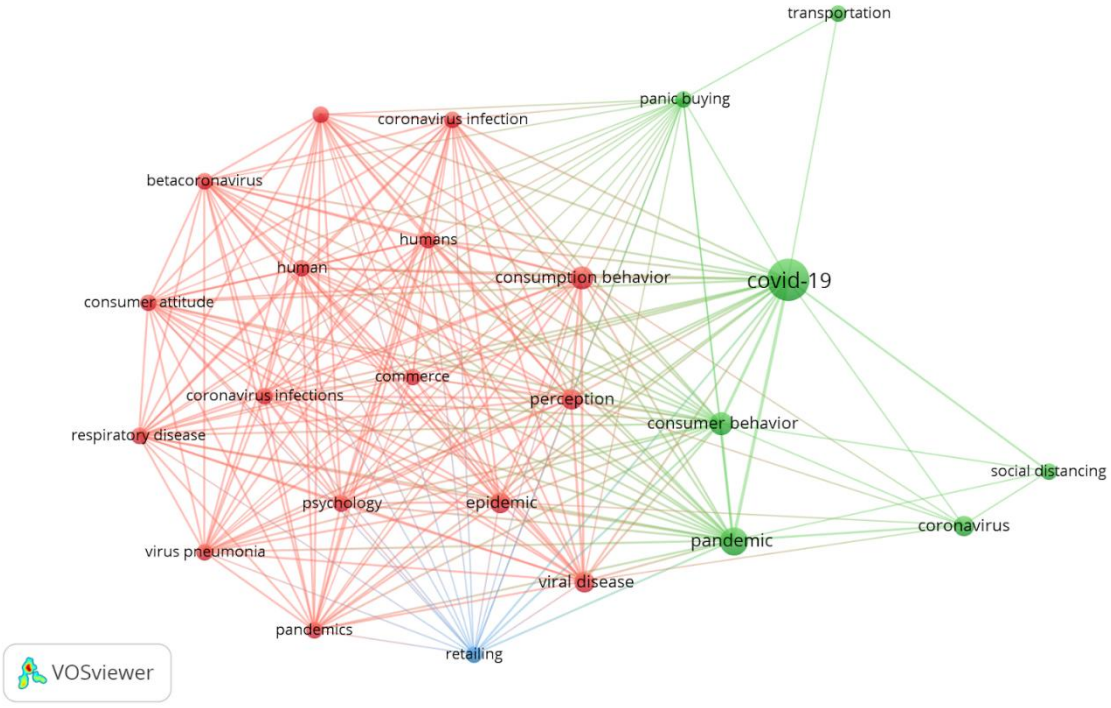
Nutrients	1	4,17
Publishing Research Quarterly	1	0,69
Sustainability (Switzerland)	1	2,59
Tourism Geographies	1	2,88

Findings

RQ1: What topics are being explored by the literature?

Figure 6 shows the co-occurrence network of keywords found in the works on the theme. Those that appeared at least 2 times were considered. These words can assume the role of categorizing the studies analyzed, highlighting the points that are studies and evidence of possible theoretical gaps not addressed. The words are represented by circles and divided into clusters, and the size of the circles corresponds to the number of articles that used them.

Figure 1.
Keywords



The first cluster (red) consists of keywords like "coronavirus infection", "humans" and "psychology". The studies of this group discuss the impact of the virus on the lives of consumers, on social, human, psychological relationships, as the intentions, interests, motivations, and predispositions to purchase suffered interference with the pandemic. The second cluster (green) is composed mainly of "transportation", "social distancing", "panic buying". These studies reflected on changes in the supply chain and its impacts on consumers, how social distance has changed consumption patterns and buying behavior due to panic.

Finally, the third cluster (blue) is composed only by the word “retailing”, which includes studies that addressed the effects of COVID-19 on retail, assessing its short and long term impacts.

Despite the limited number of studies dedicated to understanding the impacts of the pandemic on consumer culture, we were still able to identify a predominance of research focused on food (eg. agricultural products, meal kits, and fast foods), changes in the consumption pattern (e.g., panic buying, falling consumption of premium products, increased demand for products substitutes), and new demands for delivery service and technology. It is worth mentioning that these impacts on consumer behavior are addressed in the background, the discussions of the papers are mainly focused on the effects that COVID-19 has been having on production, management processes, and the economy.

Due to the impacts caused on the structures of global supply chains and given the isolation policies implemented in most countries, consumers have changed their eating habits and products are stocked for two main reasons: i) fear of lack of products (cf. Hobbs, 2020); ii) concerns about exposure, once medical recommendations suggest that individuals buy products for many days to avoid going to supermarkets daily (cf. Eneizan et al., 2020). This behavior causes profound changes that are evaluated as lasting (Richards & Rickard, 2020) in the channels and places of consumption and food acquisition (Cranfield, 2020). More than 75% of consumers experienced different shopping behavior during the crisis, including experimenting with new brands and places to shop (S. Bhargava et al., 2020).

The time variable has been discussed in some studies as a determining factor in changing individuals' behavior. Families that have more difficulties in adapting to the new routine increased the demand for meal kits and prepared foods. On the other hand, families that have managed to fit their daily activities to the new lifestyle without major inconvenience, plan their budgets and reduce costs, have acquired more time to prepare their meals (Cranfield, 2020). However, some research points out that changes in restaurant consumption for meals at home, especially fruit and vegetables, have potentially important implications for food waste (Richards & Rickard, 2020; Jribi, Ben Ismail, Doggui & Debbabi, 2020)

The increase in the price of products directly affects the structure of individual preferences and family budgets. According to S. Bhargava et al. (2020), more than 46% of consumers plan to reduce spending during the pandemic and approximately 60% of consumers plan to reduce spending on consumer electronics or vehicles. Individuals became more sensitive to price and increased demand for elastic goods (Hobbs, 2020). In this perspective, the consumption of non-essential products, products of premium lines (Agarwal & Sunitha, 2020), and purchases of more expensive goods have been drastically reduced.

Several pieces of research have explored and sought to explain the causes of panic buying. Yuen et al. (2020) discuss four factors that influence this buying behavior. 1) perception of perceived danger: people noticed a health crisis and one assessed a possible food shortage; 2) fear of the unknown: people experienced feelings such as fear, anguish, and anxiety at the beginning and during an outbreak; 3) coping behavior: the purchase of panic is evaluated with a way to regain control of the situation and judged with a possible solution to the problem; 4) psychosocial factors: individuals adjust their behaviors to meet the demands of the social environment.

COVID-19 pandemic has a positive and significant impact on online product purchase intentions (Nguyen et al., 2020). In the United States, most categories recorded an increase of 15 to 30% in the growth of users of online channels (S. Bhargava et al., 2020). The pandemic has accelerated the transition of consumer culture in the online hemisphere and has made many consumers who hesitated to make purchases on websites and applications more open to these sales channels (Kim, 2020). Furthermore, it also improves the relationship between buyers and sellers, creating trust between supply chain partners, stores, and consumers (Hobbs, 2020).

Other issues are pointed in the literature analyzing the crisis in the tourism sector and consumption of this service in the post-pandemic era (Benjamin, Dillette & Alderman, 2020); information consumption (Li et al., 2020); telemedicine services and adapting consumers to this new model of providing medical services; tobacco consumption and nicotine availability (ECs) (Pino et al., 2020); definition of products/services considered essential from cultural factors (Gray, 2020); consumption of books online and the impacts of the publishing industry (Nguyen et al., 2020); and, the role of Corporate Social Responsibility and the influence of marketing practices (He & Harris, 2020) on consumer behavior were addressed in only one paper.

RQ2: What issues did COVID-19 bring to consumers' lives?

In a crisis like this pandemic, consumer decision making can be irrational (He & Harris, 2020). When the first case was confirmed in the people's state, they often search for coronavirus, coronavirus symptoms, and hand sanitizer. Public health policies and personal health strategies were not triggered by this first report (Bento et al, 2020). Still in the topic of information and internet, Li et al. (2020) found that the YouTube platform has a large number of videos regarding the pandemic from specialized health organizations that provide relevant information, however, when analyzing the most cited videos, over one-quarter of those have misinformation and can be dangerous for people seeking information.

Kirk and Rifkin (2020) discuss how consumer behavior is going through three phases in this pandemic: reacting, coping, and adapting (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). The first one is how the consumer is reacting to the pandemic in their lives. Consumers, in the beginning, adopted a hoarding behavior because they were afraid of the scarcity of products and so they adopted this behavior to reduce their lack of control (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

Consumers are stoking more products (Richards & Rickard, 2020), this hoarding behavior can make goods unavailable and increase prices up to 300% and consumers will still pay (Pantano et al., 2020). Yuen et al. (2020) investigated this issue of panic buying and found that it was triggered by the threat of a crisis and scarcity of products, the fear of the unknown, coping behavior, and social psychological factors. Furthermore, Song et al. (2020) found that the threat of death increases the consumer's need to belong, materialism, and informational conformity. Therefore, the consumer's fear in this crisis increased their buying behavior.

Furthermore, aiming to decrease the spreading of the virus, the adoption of face masks has been recommended. However, consumers' adoption has not been total, for some consumers believe they may lose their freedom and thus, the use of communication (i.e imposing fear), can shape consumer's response to those health recommendations.

In coping with the pandemic, consumers have been using technology to reduce social distancing and to maintain social relationships (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). At the beginning of the quarantine, some consumers chose to leave their house to spend this time with friends and family. Those attitudes were means of reducing physical and psychological distancing. Also, consumers are adopting more do-it-yourself activities now. The lack of products available help consumers to engage in such activities and also, they feel more competence and pride, thus empowering consumer in these times (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

This crisis changes the relationship that consumers have with brands, as as they believe that the responses of those brands to the pandemic will have an impact on their future purchasing (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). This leads to a deeper discussion of consumer ethics in the pandemic. He and Harris (2020) declare that this crisis allowed consumers to reflect on basic consumption and what consumption means. The crisis showed selfish-driven consumption, but also altruistic consumption. The authors reinforce how consumers during this crisis are more conscious of the impact of their brand and product choices have (He & Harris, 2020).

Another topic very investigated in the literature is food. Jribi et al. (2020) sought to identify how the pandemic would affect food waste and found that consumers declare that the pandemic would reduce the amount of food that would be discarded. The authors discuss how this phenomenon occurs more because of the socioeconomic context, such as the availability of food than of pro-environmental behavior. Sidor and Rzymski (2020) investigated dietary choices in this pandemic and how it has been affecting the consumers' life. The results show that 43% of the consumers declare that they are eating more and 53% are snaking more. Furthermore, 30% gained weight, and 18% lost. Individuals that were already overweight tended to gain more weight and those underweighted lost even more, while 14.6% declared an increase in alcohol consumption and 45% of smokers increased their frequency during the quarantine.

Argawal e Sunitha (2020) discuss some effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the cancelation of events, the lack of supply of essential products, delay in delivery, the price of oil that was drastically reduced, agricultural production and the education market. The authors also reinforced how quarantine is fundamental for reducing social and economic impacts.

The lower accessibility of consumers to stores has also led to an increase in the seek for alternative distribution channels (Pantano et al., 2020), such as the internet, where the consumption of buying books online was increased (Nguyen et al., 2020). The panic buying lead supply chains to adapt to answer the consumer' needs (Hobbs, 200), exposing how fragile it is the global supply chain (Spash, 2020) and the need to new transportation will lead to delays (Gray, 2020) and can increase the prices (Cranfield, 2020).

To adapt to those changes and live the new normal, the adaptation of technologies to reduce physical distancing and to improve our purchasing opportunities are being brought to the market and being used very quickly (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Thus, this is a moment of disruption where consumer behavior is being changed immensely.

RQ3: How will the COVID-19 chance consumer behavior in the future?

Kirk & Rifkin (2020) argue how this pandemic will change who we are as consumers and as humans. The authors discuss moral injury as a phenomenon that occurs in outcomes of war and that can be an output of this current context. Firstly, social distancing changed how grieving rites occur and people lost their loved ones without saying goodbye. Furthermore, health workers had to choose who would get an assistantship, as equipment was scarce. These behaviors will change consumers and can shape their self-identities (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

As humans, technology will change our social connections and transform the way we live and the way we buy (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). The changes in consumer habits accelerated the digital transformation in the market (Kim, 2020). Therefore, we should see more changes in the market and more solutions as responses to physical distancing measures.

Moreover, there is going to be a change in health services as consumers will be more concerned about the health and could have an increase in the use of technology such as video chats to medical consultations and the use of technology to track heartbeats and blood pressure. Research has already shown how there is been an increase in telemedicine services (Contreras et al., 2020).

In the future, tourism needs to be guided by service ethics, social and environmental justice, and racial reconciliation and providing a safe environment for customers and employees (Benjamin et al., 2020). Furthermore, changes can be projected regarding companies assuming activities of Corporate Social Responsibility, as consumers are more concerned with the impact of their purchase and how the brands are responding to this crisis (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

RQ4: How to respond to the consequences that this pandemic is bringing?

There are some strategies that companies can adopt to help consumers in this challenging time. Firstly, changes in the purchasing, such as limiting the purchasing and maintaining full shelves can help consumers in those hoarding tendencies, as they will feel less risk of scarcity (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Furthermore, information on the future availability of products can also decrease risk perception (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Although consumers are not always satisfied with those measures, companies are also implementing new online services and home delivery (Pantano et al., 2020).

Responses in communication can also be trivial now more than ever. Consumers will feel betrayed if companies use this scenario to increase prices as a means to be more profitable (Pantano et al., 2020). Thus, the business response is fundamental. Some companies have hired employees to help in the peak of demand and others transferred their workers to internet-based services (Pantano et al., 2020). Luxury brands have been affected harder by those changes in consumption habits, therefore, they are using the communication channels to provide messages of comfort and also donating essential products and pieces of equipment to help in the health emergency (Pantano et al., 2020).

A wrong communication, for instance, can decrease consumer's tendency to use masks and social-responsible companies need to maintain their positions or consumers will perceive them as a sham (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Retail needs to focus its communication in putting their consumers at the center and certifying that their health and safety are more important than profit but also providing their services as quickly as possible (Pantano et al., 2020). Furthermore, the role of agility in retail needs to be explored even further as companies need to answer consumer's demands quickly and reduce times and processes (Pantano et al., 2020). Therefore, stakeholders' collaboration in this time is fundamental to increase value to the supply chain.

He & Harris (2020) discuss how this pandemic brings a new opportunity to discuss Corporate Social Responsibility, as consumers are more engaged in how the company is responding and they are more likely to change to more responsible and prosocial consumption.

To reduce the economic effects of the crisis, governments are applying stimulus programs to increase consumption. However, to increase the efficiency of these programs, we need to consider demographic and/or socio-economic factors (Kadoya, Khan & Yamane, 2020).

In the marketplace, Eneizan et al. (2020) discuss strategies to refrain more cases of COVID-19 such as avoid spaces with too many people, choosing to pay online, elderly not personally-receiving the purchases, cleaning the food and buy more to reduce needing to buy every day.

RQ5: What are the future topics that need an investigation from the literature?

Some topics need to be addressed regarding the consumer and business in the future. Firstly, there is a need to investigate further the economic challenges of this pandemic in consumers, especially in minorities, which are being affected hardly (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Also, to investigate demographic, cultural, and other individual differences, such as elderly adoption of technology (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Furthermore, He & Harris (2020) indicates that changes in consumer behavior to more responsible and prosocial consumption now needs to be addressed in the future to identify if those short-term changes will impact ethical behavior in the future. Still, there is a need to investigate consumer's responses to lockdown restrictions.

From the company perspective, there is a need to assess how companies are responding to this crisis and how they are communicating with their clients, as it is fundamental in this context (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020; Pantano et al., 2020). Moreover, the disruptions of the supply

chain, the increase in the demand and the need to alternative delivery channels pose a challenge that needs to be addressed by retail research on how to be more agile (Pantano et al., 2020), reducing process and times to respond quickly to the customer's needs.

Discussions

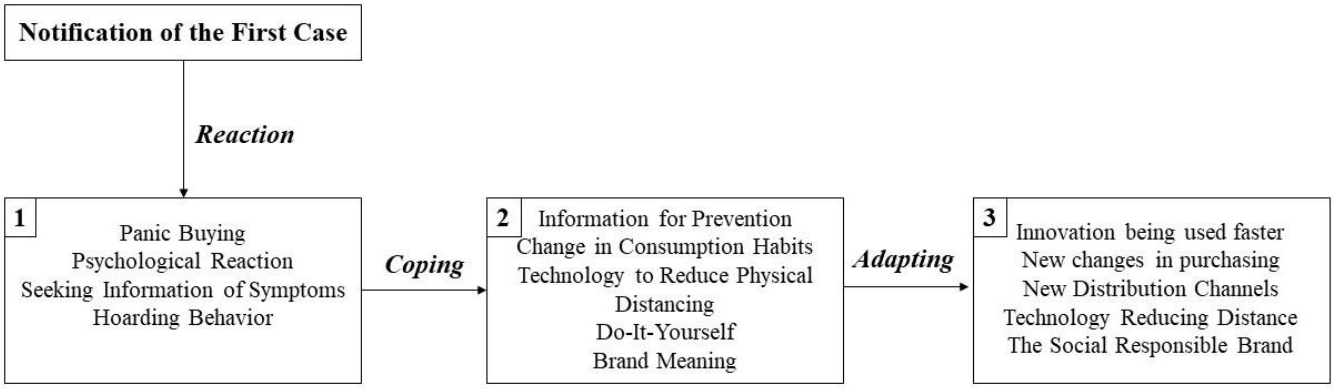
Research Implications

Figure 2 summarizes the results we found by conducting a systematic literature review on COVID-19 and consumer behavior. We were able to identify that consumers' reaction in this crisis goes through three phases: reaction, coping and adapting (see. Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). In each of those phases, consumer behavior varies and their consumer habits change to better deal with the crisis.

When consumers are reacting to the COVID-19 crisis, they firstly adopt hoarding behaviors, they adopt panic buying behaviors and overall have a strong psychological reaction. The results show that the main solutions to consumers reduce their physical distancing and cope with this scenario is to use technology. In this stage, consumers also adopt do-it-yourself activities to feel more pride and empowerment. Finally, the solution to adapt to this new context is the accelerated use of technology to improve our purchasing opportunities and distribution channels.

Figure 2.

Summarization of Results



Note. The figure was made by us but the content is from the results of the research conducted and that are presented in the findings section.

We believe that our results will help consumers researches by providing evidence-based information in how the COVID-19 pandemic affects consumer research and the topics that need to be explored in the future to help our understanding even further.

Managerial Implications

In seeking to understand how consumer behavior has been affected by this crisis, we were also able to identify how companies' responses are important and how can they help to

empower the consumer experience in the marketplace. Firstly, companies need to deal with the increase of purchasing in basic products and establish rules to deal with the increase in demand.

Secondly, communication with the customer is fundamental in those times. Companies need to address the issue of the pandemic and show the client how they are still a fundamental part of their business and how the business is acting to help. Companies that are signaling how they are helping health specialists and providing equipment in this challenging time can be better seen by the customer, as they are becoming more conscious and concerned about their consumption habits.

Lastly, retail will have significant changes for a long time. Companies need to address agile solutions to reduce process and time and increase value in the supply chain. Furthermore, as long as the virus is still spreading, businesses need to make sure to the customers how they are following health protocols and how to think in a safe environment to the client and employees as businesses are starting to reopen.

Conclusions and Future Research Topics

The purpose of this paper was to systematically review the literature available concerning the COVID-19 pandemic in the consumer domain. To do so, we conducted a systematic literature review in the Scopus database with 22 papers that were published regarding the topic. The results were divided into the five research questions where we addressed the changes in consumer behavior and how are companies addressing those issues and how can they better act to help to empower those customers.

Despite the significant information we provide in this paper, some limitations need to be remarked. The novelty of the topic provides us with reduced information, thus increasing the difficulty in finding fundamental documentation for a literature review. As time pass, further research will emerge and new findings will be added to our understanding of this topic. Thinking about the increase in the number of papers, our methodology was designed to be replicated in the future, so other literature revisions can add forthcoming research, other databases, and papers ahead-of-print as a means to make the results more solid.

We were far from ending the discussions regarding the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on consumer behavior, then some topics are very important to develop our understanding of consumer behavior after this crisis and need to be addressed: 1) The quarantine forced people to spend more time in their homes, thus relying more on the consumption of streaming services as a primary source of entertainment. Therefore, research should investigate how did those platforms help consumers to feel empowered when they could not go out to go to the movies or with friends. 2) Individuals are losing their job and those lost are higher when we analyze the division by men and women, so it is fundamental to consumer research, especially transformative consumer research, to address the effects of the loss of consumption power of those people and how can public policies help those consumers in vulnerability. 3) What does consumption mean people live now? When the essential consumption is so valued, what is the role of hedonic values in this context?

Despite the limitations pointed out, this article has social and theoretical implications once it can help consumers and organizations in summarizing the research about the impact of COVID-19 on consumption. Research now is more important than ever and consumer research has the power to identify the fundamental changes that this pandemic brought to people’s life. Now it is time to gather the theoretical basis we have available and to question how can we empower consumers in this difficult time.

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