

COVID-19 Related Concerns and Purchasing Behaviour of US and Polish Consumers

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Abstract

This article addresses COVID-19 pandemic-related fears and anxiety experienced by consumers. The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was new to consumers, caused a great deal of anxiety, especially in the initial period and during the intensification of the subsequent waves, and led to many changes in purchasing behaviour.

In two cross-sectional surveys conducted in the last days of 2020 and 2021, respectively, individuals from the USA and Poland answered questions on perceived pandemic-related anxiety (COVID-19 Anxiety Syndrome Scale by Nikčevića and Spadab), declared changes in shopping behaviour and decision-making styles measured by SPDZ questionnaire developed by authors (measuring consumer decision-making styles in extended, by similar to classical Sproles and Kendall approach).

The article presents selected results from the survey on the background of more qualitative insights on shopping behaviour during a pandemic. Results were compared across the country and the two editions of the survey, mainly using analyses of variance (ANOVA).

The results from the first study indicate a perception of stronger fear and a higher tendency to change behaviour than during the second study (during waves of the Delta and Omicron variants of the virus). Most of the changes reported occurred during the first waves of the pandemic. The higher infectiousness of the variants circulating during the second study did not strongly influence the purchasing behaviour of the buyers, who were largely accustomed to the pandemic situation.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, fear, consumer behaviour, consumer decision-making styles