

THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION IN THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC CRISIS ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES: MODELS AND TRANSITIONS

O IMPACTO DA EDUCAÇÃO NA CRISE EPIDÊMICA DO COVID-19 NAS ATITUDES DO CONSUMIDOR: MODELOS E TRANSIÇÕES

EL IMPACTO DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN LA CRISIS EPIDÉMICA DE COVID-19 EN LAS ACTITUDES DE LOS CONSUMIDORES: MODELOS Y TRANSICIONES

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ABSTRACT: The main purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of changing the consumption structure of urban residents and the impact of education in times of economic crisis. As a research method, the questionnaire method is used, which allows us to effectively identify the peculiarities of the ideas of urban residents about the change in the degree of satisfaction of different groups of needs during the period of self-isolation. Based on the results acquired, the article describes the impact of change in the structure of consumption on the health and social well-being of the population in the modern economic crisis. It is revealed that the economy in food products occurs mainly due to the optimization of the consumer basket and the change to cheaper analogues. It is shown that the crisis did not affect both alcohol consumption and food consumption.

KEYWORDS: Consumer attitudes. Education. Consumer society. Ideas about consumption. COVID-19 pandemic.

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RESUMO: O objetivo principal deste estudo é analisar as características da mudança na estrutura de consumo dos residentes urbanos e o impacto da educação em tempos de crise econômica. Como método de pesquisa, utiliza-se o método do questionário, que nos permite identificar efetivamente as peculiaridades das ideias dos residentes urbanos sobre a mudança no grau de satisfação de diferentes grupos de necessidades durante o período de autoisolamento. Com base nos resultados obtidos, o artigo descreve o impacto da mudança na estrutura de consumo sobre a saúde e o bem-estar social da população na crise econômica moderna. Revela-se que a economia em produtos alimentícios ocorre principalmente em função da otimização da cesta de consumo e da mudança para análogos mais baratos. Mostra-se que a crise não afetou o consumo de álcool e o consumo de alimentos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Atitudes do consumidor. Educação. Sociedade de consumo. Idéias sobre o consumo. Pandemia de COVID-19.

RESUMEN: El objetivo principal de este estudio es analizar las características del cambio de la estructura de consumo de los residentes urbanos y el impacto de la educación en tiempos de crisis económica. Como método de investigación se utiliza el método del cuestionario, que permite identificar de forma eficaz las peculiaridades de las ideas de los habitantes urbanos sobre el cambio en el grado de satisfacción de diferentes grupos de necesidades durante el período de autoaislamiento. A partir de los resultados adquiridos, el artículo describe el impacto del cambio en la estructura del consumo sobre la salud y el bienestar social de la población en la crisis económica moderna. Se revela que la economía en productos alimenticios se da principalmente por la optimización de la canasta de consumo y el cambio a análogos más baratos. Se muestra que la crisis no afectó tanto al consumo de alcohol como al consumo de alimentos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Actitudes del consumidor. Educación. Sociedad de consumo. Ideas sobre el consumo. Pandemia COVID-19.

Introduction

Modern society, as scientists define it, is a consumer society. Such a society forms a consumer culture of ordinary people, and it, in turn, determines the vector of development of shopping practices. The economic need for consumption is the main reason for the involvement of a person in mass consumption (KRASILYTSIKOV, 1993; GUZHEVA, 2000; DENISOV, 1996; GLADAREV, 2006; MARCUSE, 2002). Today, science has increasingly begun to turn to the study of everyday practices. Today, researchers are increasingly moving away from cumbersome theories that exist in isolation from social reality, filled with completely different meanings and constructs of everyday life. Consumption practices are inextricably linked with the consumer culture of the actors involved in the consumption process (BAUDRILLARD, 2006; KALININ, 2009; MIKHAILOVA; GUROVA, 2009; YAKOVLEVA, 2011; HABERMAS, 2005).

In the post-Soviet period, the works of scientists were also devoted to the study of various aspects of consumption. A rational person is not a characteristic feature of the new society. In addition, if we say that philistinism was an adequate form of the culture of rising capitalism, then the new type of society introduces new terms, which include anti-philistinism or consumerism. Initially, the nature of society allows us to understand the structure in which an individual acts, that is, a list of possibilities from which the possible desires of individuals also follow.

Often, studying the features of consumption, they distinguish real and symbolic consumption. The first group of expenses is the most important for maintaining the standard of living, health and efficiency, but the fifth group, namely, medical services, is no less important. Because the crisis associated with the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the incomes of the population and the state of the business environment, a large number of studies and analytical materials have recently been devoted to this topic. Researchers of the problems of consumption note that consumer ideology in the twentieth century is becoming dominant and is characterized by the imposition of hedonistic principles of life organization, the promotion of quick, immediate enrichment at any cost, the consumption of expensive prestigious things, in general, a beautiful life (ILYIN, 2000; VOLKOV; KHARKHORDIN, 2008; SOROKOUMOVA *et al.*, 2020; GUROVA, 2004).

Literature Review

The outbreak of Coronavirus is considered a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Thousands of health professionals are fighting heroically against this uninvited guest, risking their lives and health, and governments and industries are working together to understand and address this challenge (FITRIASARI, 2020). Many countries have taken serious steps to curb or delay the spread of the disease. Measures taken in response to the expansion of the corona have led to a massive disruption to business and a significant increase in economic uncertainty with rising asset prices and exchange rates. There has been a dramatic decline in long-term interest rates in developed economies. In addition, oil prices have fallen sharply after OPEC and Russia disagreed on production cuts at the March 2020 summit. These events and circumstances cause uncertainties and risks that companies have not previously faced and are estimated to have significant consequences on their performance, activities, and processes (SOROKOUMOVA *et al.*, 2020).

Since history shows that some changes in such circumstances are not temporary, we may see a significant change in the beliefs and behaviors of societies. This means that major disruptions can lead to fundamental changes in attitudes and social beliefs, which provide the basis for new policies, changes in working methods, needs and consumer behaviors, and so on (MEHTA *et al.*, 2020).

Among these historical events and the changes caused by socio-economic crises, we can mention the Black Death or the Plague in the 14th century, which spread to Europe and then to the rest of the world. In Europe alone, about 30 million people fell victim to this. They became ill (BOYACI-GÜNDÜZ *et al.*, 2021). This crisis had far-reaching socio-economic effects. These include ending feudalism and slavery in many countries and transferring power to workers' rights forces. Social crises can also have lasting effects on consumption patterns. For example, the recent social crisis, the 2003 SARS virus outbreak in China, changed attitudes toward shopping; many people turned to online retail because they were afraid to go out. Although the crisis was short-lived, many consumers continued to use e-commerce channels after the crisis, paving the way for Alibaba and other digital giants (BARTSC *et al.*, 2020).

The latest McKenzie polls show that most executives have a broad outlook for the global economy, with two-thirds believing in a sharp contraction. Interviewees in China were more optimistic about the outlook for national economies than others. Interviewees in North America also expect improvements in the coming months compared to other countries. In Latin America, too, it is believed that their economies will be worse off than in other regions in the near future. The World Bank predicts that world poverty will increase significantly. According to this estimate, East Asian countries will suffer the least, and African countries will suffer the most (BARANOV *et al.*, 2019).

Following the outbreak of coronary heart disease, many economic disturbances have gripped countries around the world. Many experts and economists believe that the hidden effects of this crisis will be revealed in the post-Corona era. Decreased performance in economic indicators, slowing production activities, reducing the level of service delivery in the transport industry, restaurants, retail, falling oil prices due to declining global economic activity, stock market turmoil, and low bond yields etc. Obvious effects and this crisis is evident. In general, recessions caused by the Corona crisis are considered as one of the following (RAPACCINI *et al.*, 2020; BOYACI-GÜNDÜZ *et al.*, 2021):

- Real recession: A real recession is caused by severe shocks to supply, and demand, such as war, natural disasters, and others, and generally pushes both supply and demand toward contraction. However, the Coronavirus is likely to damage the world economy seriously.

- Political stagnation: When central banks set interest rates differently from market equilibrium, they influence credit conditions and, based on their intentions, push contractionary or expansionary policies to changing market conditions. During the Corona outbreak, various countries quickly implemented new monetary policies.
- Financial crisis: Financial fluctuations tend to slow but long movements. There are significant differences in global markets, and the type and effects of the financial crisis in each of them must be considered separately. Concerning coronary heart disease, it will be difficult to assess the consequences of financial crises accurately, but what is certain is that the pressure on business cash flows, especially small and medium-sized businesses, will be problematic.

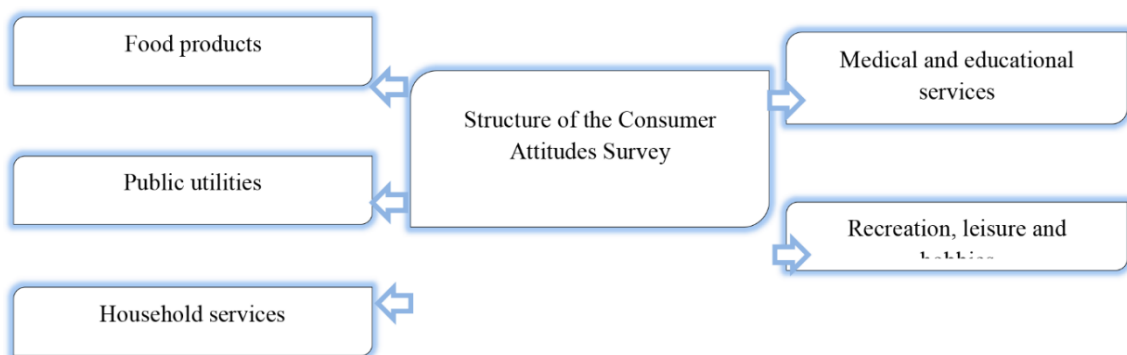
As the Coronavirus continues to spread, human crises are intertwined with economic and social problems and disorders. Banks, which are no exception to this rule, have taken measures to overcome this crisis. Asian banks, like other banks, have had to deal with several economic and social factors. Maintain banking operations, care for the workforce and inform customers of the actions taken by them. The actions of Asian banks can be a valuable model for banks around the world that are still in the midst of a crisis and the beginning. Focusing on three principles, namely (1) ensuring the viability and survival of the business, (2) doing Social Responsibility, and (3) Adapting to New Customers, Banks Can Minimize Disruptions and Continue to Provide Vital Services to Customers (ALHUBAISHY; ALJUHANI, 2021).

The normal state of businesses, banks, and broadly the habits and attitudes of the people, their behavior and consumption habits will not be like any of the years before the advent of the corona. In order to face the challenges and problems caused by this crisis, the executives of organizations and small and large businesses must equip themselves with agile and flexible solutions and tools (FOROUDI *et al.*, 2021). Answering problems in times of crisis will only be the beginning of managers' work; obviously, businesses in the post-Corona era will be successful in modeling successful efforts to meet the current challenge and be equipped with a variety of weapons and extend their horizons to farther horizons (GALANAKIS *et al.*, 2021). It is generally stated that managers must accelerate the digital transformation of the organization; and this must be accompanied by an increase in the level of flexibility, bold action based on an understanding of the risks involved, and a commitment to a community-based approach (BAI *et al.* 2021).

Methods

To achieve the research objectives, it is necessary to study the changes and the degree of satisfaction of respondents with the level of consumption corresponding to each category. When conducting the study, the questionnaire survey method is used. The choice of this method is because with the help of this method it is possible to obtain a high level of mass research in a short time with the least cost. Nominal and ordinal scales are used to study changes in consumer costs. The structure of the survey is made up of the following units (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Structure of the survey of urban residents' consumer attitudes



Source: Research data.

The questions proposed in the questionnaire were the following.

- How old are you?
- What are you interested in do you do?
- What kind of education did you receive?
- Where did you study? In what field of training did you study?
- What are you working for now?
- What is your current marital status?
- Has the volume of food you consume changed now?
- How much were your needs for high quality and varied nutrition met this year during self-isolation?
- Did you have to give up the consumption of any food groups during the period of self-isolation?
- What consumption foods you had to reduce during self-isolation?
- Are you experiencing any inconveniences due to the current crisis and the changed consumption of clothing and shoes?
- How have your expenses for the purchase of various household items changed?

- How satisfied were your needs for high quality, full-fledged nutrition this year?
- Did you visit public catering places before the onset of the economic crisis?
- Did you have to switch to buying online products of restaurants and cafes of a lower price category than you visited before, due to the current economic situation?
- How your expenses for products related to hobbies and recreation have changed?
- Did you experience any inconveniences because you could not purchase the necessary household appliances?
- How did the economic crisis affect your receipt of household services, for example, such as: shoe repair, clothing, household appliances, furniture, and dry-cleaning services?
- How did the economic crisis affect your receipt of educational services?
- Have your spending on educational services changed due to the crisis?
- Have your expenses for paid medical services changed due to the crisis?
- How did the economic crisis affect your vacation in general?

During the pilot study, it turned out that almost half of the respondents during the current crisis reduced the volume of food consumption; two-thirds of respondents switched to cheaper products compared to the usual ones, but at the same time the costs of most respondents increased. It was determined that a relatively small proportion of respondents refused to consume public catering products online (19%), and 41% began to consume these products less often.

Results

The study revealed that almost one in five of the respondents did not visit public catering places either before or during the economic crisis. One in four of the respondents reported that they had to switch to public catering places of a lower price category. For most respondents who did not change the frequency of visits, the costs increased. The costs decreased only for those who began to visit public catering places less often or refused to visit at all, but only 13% of those surveyed turned out to be such. Consequently, the decline in the volume and structure of food consumption at home is accompanied by a similar trend in the field of public catering. Every third of the respondents stated that they were dissatisfied with their nutritional needs. Thus, the economic events associated with the coronavirus pandemic had a strong impact on the consumption of food in every fifth of the respondents. The next indicator of the consumption structure is the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The study of changes in this element of the consumption structure showed that only 3% of respondents were forced by the crisis to give up

alcoholic beverages. One in five of the respondents switched to cheaper drinks, and one in three did not change their preferences. It is noteworthy that 13% switched to homemade alcohol. 51% of respondents noted an increase in spending on alcoholic beverages, and 21% of respondents noted a decrease, while for 15% the expenses remained at the same level. Thus, the crisis did not affect the consumption of alcoholic beverages as much as the consumption of food.

The next element of the consumption structure is the purchase of non-food products, such as clothing, shoes, television and radio equipment, vehicles. The following results were shown. The number of purchased outerwear and shoes was reduced by 29% of respondents, one in five switched to clothing and shoes of a lower price category, less than ten percent of respondents postponed the purchase of goods in this category, and almost one in three of the respondents did not change their preferences. 21% of respondents refused to buy TV and radio equipment and household appliances, 31% reduced their needs in this category of goods. Thus, more than half of the respondents are forced to reduce the quality of everyday life. Some of the respondents switched to cheaper equipment, but there were 6% of them. At the same time, most respondents (63%), who changed the consumption of goods in this category, said that they did not experience any inconvenience in this regard.

In general, the crisis associated with the pandemic had a strong impact on the consumption of household appliances. This is due to both a decrease in purchasing power and an increase in prices for imported equipment due to the instability of the ruble exchange rate. Slightly less than half of the respondents are owners of motor vehicles. Most of the car owners participating in the survey noted that the crisis did not affect their use of the car in any way. Due to the crisis, 41% of respondents who wanted to buy a car earlier postponed the purchase of a car. There were 4% of respondents who wanted to buy vehicles before self-isolation, and 13% did not plan to buy, but decided to buy a car to save savings, the rest did not think about buying at all. At the same time, the respondents have not yet felt the negative consequences of the transformation. It turned out that more than half of the respondents (76%) have an increase in utility costs. At the same time, 19% have difficulties in paying for utilities and an increase in arrears on them. Almost a third of respondents partially refused to use household services: repair of shoes, clothing, household appliances, furniture, and dry-cleaning services; about the same number did not use this type of services either before or during the crisis. Of the respondents using this type of services, 51% noted an increase in spending on household services, 3% did not see significant changes in spending, and 13% reduced spending due to the refusal of some services. The impact of the crisis on the provision of educational services was insignificant. Only 2% of respondents refused to receive educational services, 2% partially

refused. At the same time, one in eight of the respondents did not use educational services. The expenses for these services have not changed; most of the respondents (61%) noted an increase in expenses. The degree of satisfaction of respondents' needs for educational services is also quite high. 2% completely refused to use medical services, partially 23%. When asked about the costs of this type of services, 76% noted that their expenses for medical services have increased. Less than half of the respondents believe that their needs for medical care are met to some extent. A quarter of respondents say they are dissatisfied. If we talk about the service sector, then economic instability usually affects it first and faster than all other types of consumption, and the effect lasts much longer.

During the period of shortage of funds, consumers of various segments of the service market try to save money and use only those services that are necessary. As the results of the study showed, the crisis had a significant impact on the consumption of services and the growth of spending on them. We are concerned about difficulties in paying for utilities and the growth of arrears on them. However, only a small proportion of respondents completely refused to use the types of services considered. Refusal of most of these services is technically difficult, and sometimes, for example, from utilities, it is impossible. In addition, the refusal of services reduces the quality of life of the respondent more sharply than the refusal of several food and non-food products. The next element of the consumption structure is recreation in sanatoriums, rest homes, trips to foreign countries. It turned out that 76% of respondents did not rest in rest homes and sanatoriums either before or during the economic crisis. 13% of respondents refused to rest in sanatoriums and rest homes, another 6% opted for more budget vouchers. Only for 5% the crisis did not affect trips to sanatoriums and rest homes in any way. Of the respondents who were vacationing in sanatoriums and rest homes, 61% noted that their expenses had increased. A significant part of respondents had the decreased expenses, since they had to give up the recreation. Thus, the crisis has quite significantly affected the consumption of services of this type. Due to the pandemic, many people cannot go on vacation abroad. They have to change their habits and relax in Russia, or even give up traveling altogether. Quite a significant number of respondents noted that they did not have opportunities for proper rest, and this could affect the health of the population in the long term.

Discussion

Modern society, according to scientists, is a consumer society. Today, individuals purchase goods in order to display symbols of prestige, power, and well-being. Remembering the consumer society, there is an even more obvious emphasis on the acquisition, for example, of a symbol of belonging to a certain economic group, on the principle of quantity, not quality. The quantitative indicator in this case will be considered as the purchase of a cheaper product disguised as a brand name with the goal of achieving a certain status. In this case, the reaction of society to the individual becomes calculable. Such products are not so capable of meeting the needs, rather they indicate in a latent form a desire to join the group. This form of substitution of consumer signs threatens to simulate public space.

The threat in the formation of a consumer society lies in the fact that a person disappears as an individual, and he/she is replaced by a certain image consisting of symbols and signs that determine his/her social status. A decline in real incomes usually leads to a reduction in monetary spending on consumption. Changing places of shopping, reducing, and sometimes completely abandoning the consumption of certain categories of food and services - these are one of the many changes in the structure of consumption that the crisis leads to. In this situation, it is crucial to study the level, structure and dynamics of the population's consumption of food, necessities and durable goods in crisis conditions. In this regard, the problem of the study is the lack of information about how the change in the structure of consumption affects the degree of satisfaction of different groups of the population's needs.

Conclusions

The economic events that occurred in connection with the pandemic had a strong impact on food consumption. Savings on food products occur primarily due to the optimization of the consumer basket and switching to cheaper analogues. The decline in the volume and structure of food consumption at home is accompanied by a similar trend in the field of public catering. More than half of the respondents reported an increase in food costs. The crisis did not affect the consumption of alcoholic beverages as much as the consumption of food. Nevertheless, almost half of the respondents reported an increase in spending on this category of goods.

The consumption of non-food products: clothing, shoes, television and radio equipment, vehicles, is characterized largely by a decrease in consumption volumes, to a lesser extent by a change in its structure. The crisis has had quite a significant impact on the consumption of services and the growth of spending on them. A third of the respondents had difficulties in

paying for utilities and the growth of arrears on them. Half of the respondents reported an increase in spending on household services: repair of shoes, clothing, household appliances, furniture, and dry-cleaning services. The consumption of medical and educational services has changed to a lesser extent. It can be noted that only a small proportion of respondents completely refused to use the types of services considered. There was a study of respondents' opinions on changes in the degree of satisfaction of different groups of needs. A significant part of the respondents stated that they were dissatisfied with their nutritional needs. The situation is more complicated with the satisfaction of the needs for rest, a significant proportion of respondents said that their capabilities did not allow them to restore strength and health, as they would like.

The deterioration of social well-being is understood as awareness of inconveniences, a decrease in the quality of life and a feeling of being an outsider in familiar social groups, which can be caused by a changed volume and structure of consumption. Here, judging by the answers to open questions, the reduction in the consumption of household appliances, various kinds of services did not cause significant inconvenience to urban residents, with the exception of the consumption of clothing and shoes, due to the decrease in which half of the respondents experienced discomfort. At the same time, a decrease in income and, accordingly, the volume and quality of consumption can lead to a deterioration in social well-being in the long term.

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