Marketing Strategies Corresponding to Changes in Consumer Preferences Resulting from Covid-19

コロナ禍による消費者の嗜好変化に対応したマーケティング戦略

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Outline

Keywords:
address hopping
alternative office space
artificial intelligence (AI)
augmented reality (AR)
business-to-business (B2B)
business-to-consumer (B2C)
direct-to-consumer (D2C)
mixed reality (MR)
remote work/study
search engine optimization (SEO)
stock-keeping unit (SKU)
virtual reality (VR)

Abstract

The sudden impact of having to switch from traditional face-to-face teaching practice to remote e-learning amidst the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has forced students, instructors and business people to readjust their learning and teaching styles in a very short time span. Remote elearning platform companies hastily introduced their solutions to support customers worldwide, and despite the vast benefits of remote e-learning, the need to address its limitations is equally important. Instructors have had to swiftly tailor their online teaching techniques in order to acquire the near equal student output they enjoyed in face-to-face classes. Moreover, users should heed the physical and psychological short and long-term health ramifications of e-learning software in order to properly assess its overall efficacy.

This paper addresses the advantages and disadvantages of remote e-learning and the struggles university students and instructors have had to face in order to quickly change from traditional in-person to remote e-learning styles amidst mandated shutdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, it observes the physical and mental ramifications of e-learning and how instructors have tailored their online classes to acquire maximum student output. The paper includes quantitative survey results from students, instructors and working people primarily living in central Japan to better assess the strong and weak points of remote e-learning.

Covid-19の大流行が始まる中，従来の対面教育からリモートEラーニングへの切り替えという喫緊の状況により，学生と講師は超短期間で学習・教育方法を調整する必要に迫られました。デジタル学習ソフトのプラットフォーマー各社は，世界中の顧客をサポートするソリューションを火急的に導入しました。リモートEラーニングには大きなメリットがある一方で，その限界に対処する必要性も同様に重要です。講師は，学生が対面授業とほぼ同じ成果を得られるよう，オンライン教育技術を整える必要に直面しています。これらの課題に加えて，ユーザーはEラーニング全般の長期的な有効性を評価すること，リモートEラーニングによる短期，長期の身体的・精神的健康への影響に注意する必要があります。

この論文では，リモートEラーニングの長所・短所を述べるとともに，Covid-19の大流行により一時的に学校が閉鎖される最中，従来の対面授業からリモートEラーニングへの火急的変更に際し，学生と講師が直面した苦労について述べられています。更に，リモートEラーニングによる短期，長期の身体的・精神的健康への影響と上記の状況に対してどのように対応しているかについて考察します。この論文には，リモートEラーニングの長所と短所を評価するため，主に中部地方在住の学生，先生，社会人に対する定量的調査結果が含まれています。

1. Introduction

As the Covid-19 pandemic spread across the globe from its origin in Wuhan, China, the world has witnessed rapid changes in human behavior, including new forms of greetings, maintaining social distance, wearing masks at social venues, and chronically washing hands on any given day. Another significant change has been the increase of remote work and study through online meetings, classes, and other events in order to maintain social distance. To prevent the spread of the pandemic, federal and state governments implemented rigorous measures, including quarantine and isolation of infected individuals, and community lockdowns which have lead to increased feelings of loneliness and uncertainty (Hwang, et al). In general, crises seem to have a negative effect on the overall innovation activities in economies (Filippetti & Archibugi, 2011), and the Covid-19 pandemic has been no exception. On a brighter note, over this past year, people have learned to improvise and adapt in order to cope with it. One clear indicator of crisis adaptation is consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is an important and constant decision-making process of searching, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services (Valaskova et al., 2015). The pandemic has caused consumers to reevaluate their shopping routines and prioritize the items they need most, such as food, medical supplies, and other daily necessities. Consumers eat out less and are having food delivered to their homes in what has become popular as “eat in” versus “eat out”. They are buying more products online instead of going to crowded bricks-and-mortar supermarkets and malls in order to maintain social distance and comply with stay-at-home mandates. Kohli et al., (2020) state that consumers prefer trusted brands, have reduced discretionery spending and shopping frequency, and are shopping online more or at stores closer to home. Consumers have changed where and how they engage in a short period of time, and marketers and retailers have had to adapt to these rapid changes by modifying their conventional advertising campaigns. Arora et al, (2020) suggest that marketers focus less on business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing strategies and place stronger emphasis on e-commerce and digital channels which emphasize direct-to-consumer (D2C) e-commerce in order to remain competitive. Lewis (2020) writes that mobile, social media, and video channels will see the greatest increase in consumption, and brands which clearly communicate a sense of purpose, nostalgia, and are proactive about social issues will generate the most loyalty while minimizing the negative impact from the pandemic.

Although online shopping has been steadily increasing in recent years, before the pandemic, the majority of worldwide consumers preferred shopping at bricks-and-mortar stores where they could use their five senses to choose products they wished to purchase. Lowe (2020) states that the physical nature of in-store shopping played a large role as shoppers much preferred to see, touch, feel and try out items over shopping online. Bricks-and-mortar mall shopping was an event, and retailers did everything they could to lure customers into their shops while concerts and other events entertained them as they browsed around or took breaks in food courts. It was a place to spend the majority of one's day without ever worrying about catching anything but a common cold. However, Lowe (2020) claims that the Covid-19 pandemic drastically changed this, causing a rapid decline in bricks-and-mortar shop retail due to government ordered lockdowns. Liu (2020) adds that experts forecasted a 32.4% increase in e-commerce sales opposed to a 3.2% decline for brick-and-mortar sales by the end of 2020. As more consumers shop online for the first time and further purchase new categories such as online groceries, the shift to e-commerce shows no signs of slowing down post Covid-19 (Liu, 2020). Online shopping means buying product(s) without needing to go to crowded venues, have those purchases delivered directly to their homes at discount prices, and is more streamlined to get consumers to the checkout quickly (Lowe, 2020). In the same way the internet revolutionized human lives back in the early 1990's, it appears that e-commerce with augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) is set to completely transform the shopping experience and change the market. Antycip (2020) notes that VR, which uses Oculus Touch (a motion controller system used by Oculus VR in their Rift, Rift S, and Quest virtual reality systems), allows shoppers to “handle” products and “try them on”. This could lead to the end of traditional shop displays, as all products would be in a virtual environment (Antycip, 2020). According to Goldman Sachs, the market for AR and VR in retail will reach $1.6 billion by 2025, and statistics show that two-thirds of internet users will become interested in VR, while 63% said such technologies will change the way they shop forever (Antycip, 2020).

2. Changes in consumer preferences, behavior, values, & their impact on future retail marketing

Kotler & Keller (2016) define consumer preference as the subjective tastes of individual consumers, measured by their satisfaction with products after they’ve purchased them. Consumer value can be determined by how consumer utility compares with different items and their opportunity costs since they relinquish the opportunity to buy a competitive item whenever they buy a particular item (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Khalid and Qadeer (2018) write that “the field of consumer behavior revolves around understanding the various facets of the consumption process, the socio-psychological setup of the consumer, and the ways in which buying behavior could be more informed and effective” (p. 4). As the Covid-19 pandemic spread across the planet, consumer behaviors changed quickly when governments forced businesses to close and shoppers to stay at home. Galov (2020) writes that, according to a calculation by Digital Commerce 360, there were between 12 and 24 million online stores worldwide in just the first half of 2020. Online shopping has created new challenges for businesses, such as retailers discontinuing in-store sales channels and focusing more on internet webpage strategies. As demand for nonessential items and travel dropped, sales of home entertainment systems, webcams, AR and VR headgear and software, and computer monitors for remote workers and students increased (Carr, 2020). The pandemic is forcing a reassessment of values, habits and consumption patterns among consumers worldwide, and many of these trends are likely to continue post Covid-19 (Balis, 2020). Moreover, Balis states that 35% of global consumers believe their spending habits will continue changing after the pandemic, while 31% expect them to be unchanged, 25% plan to spend more on areas of importance to them, and 9% intend to spend more on anything they desire. On the other hand, Balis notes that more than a third of consumers plan to spend less while 13% expect to make deeper cuts in their spending. Acosta (2020) warns that the impact on future retail could mean:

- shoppers will look for lower prices, but product availability will remain their top concern
- supply chain and stock-keeping unit (SKU) rationalization will be top priority for retailers
- shoppers will focus on health, wellness, and safe products which will become more important than ever (Figure 1).

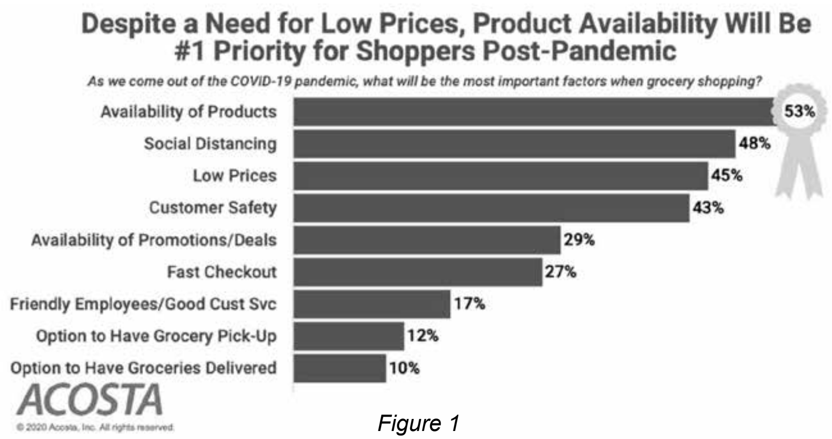

Figure 1

From "Impact on U.S. Shoppers." by G. Acosta 2020, *Retail Leader*.
https://retailleader.com/covid-19s-impact-us-shoppers

3. Worldwide Consumer Preference Changes Expected

McKinsey & Company, which conducts weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly based surveys depending on regions across 45 countries, declared that in most areas, consumers intend to continue shifting their spending from nonessential to indispensable products, while cutting back on most discretionary categories. However, as of September, 2020, spending in China and India rebounded beyond grocery and household items (Charm et al., 2020). The company's surveys indicate that worldwide consumers have responded to the crisis and its disruption to traditional consumer behavior by trying different shopping techniques, including online, and reveal that 65% or more intend to continue these behaviors beyond the

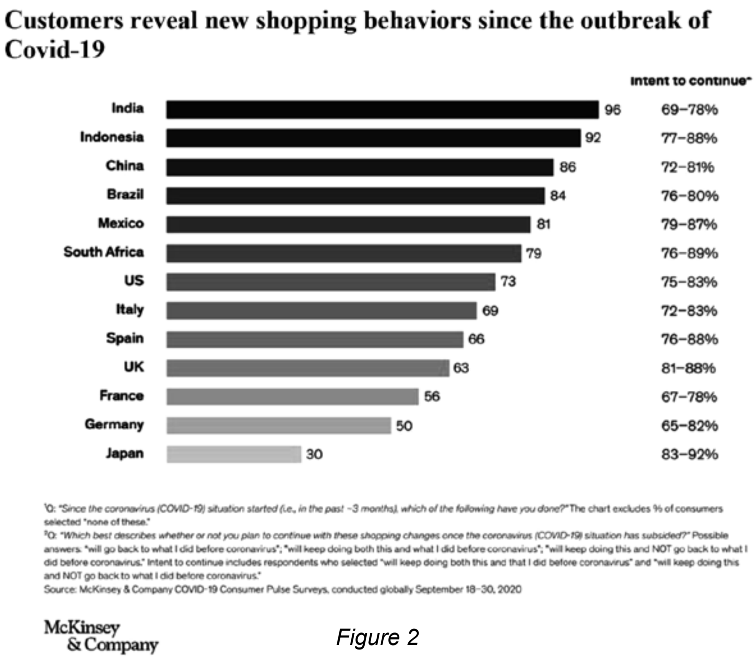

Figure 2

pandemic (Figure 2) (Charm et al., 2020). In contrast, countries such as Germany and Japan, where only a moderate degree of economic shock occurred, have shown the pandemic change in their shopping trends to be less pronounced (OECD, 2020). Regarding consumers' price sensitivity, the McKinsey & Company survey reveals that value remains the primary reason for consumers to try new brands and shopping venues, while availability and convenience are most often cited as top motivators. Meanwhile, global consumers noted product quality to be the most significant consideration when choosing new brands, followed by the desire to support their local businesses. McKinsey & Company data affirms that, compared to 2019, worldwide consumers reduced holiday spending even in countries that have exhibited signs of recovery, with 30% to 60% reporting a shift to online shopping during the 2020 holiday season (Charm et al., 2020).

3.1 Consumer preference changes in Europe

3.1.1 Germany, Spain, Italy

According to Dr. Christian Wulff (2020), head of retail and consumer at PwC Germany, based on behavioral changes from the 2007–08 financial crisis, similar trends should persist post Covid-19. 40% of European consumers experienced a decrease in household income due to the pandemic, and as a result, 38% reduced their spending throughout 2020 (Wulff, 2020). Wulff adds that consumers in countries most severely affected by the pandemic spent even less, with 56% in Spain, 43% in the UK, and 42% in Italy. Meanwhile, during the lockdown, online shopping for fast-moving consumer products significantly increased even though food retail stores and drugstores remained open. Wulff (2020) states that 28% of European consumers who live in urban areas used online shopping as the main channel for buying groceries, which is a 10% increase compared to the pre-pandemic era. Meanwhile, 52% of Germans purchased grocery products online during the lockdown, while 70% of French, Spanish and Italian consumers did the same (Figure

Figure 3 Source: PwC Study "Global Consumer Insights Survey 2020"

From Ecommerce News europe (2020). *The impact of Covid-19 on consumer trends in Europe*. https://ecommercenews.eu/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-consumer trends-in-europe/

3). More than 80% of consumers who started buying groceries online at the outbreak of the pandemic claimed they will continue to do so post Covid-19 (Wulff, 2020).

3.1.2 The UK

Hillier (2020) writes that data from Rakuten Advertising indicates that 90% of back-to-school shoppers in the UK showed consumer preferences for "cleanliness products" over traditional back-to-school items such as notebooks and stationery, with 23% of their budgets focused on hand sanitizers and face masks in preparation for the 2020 academic school year which started in late August and early September, 2020. Meanwhile, three-quarters of UK parents and 59% of university students experienced financial difficulty as a result of the pandemic, and are prioritizing only essential items resulting in 80% of university students spending less than £500 (roughly ¥68,000) on supplies in 2020 (Hillier, 2020). EBay's annual Christmas

Spend Trends Report, (Hillier) revealed that more than 27% of UK consumers started their Christmas shopping in August, 2020 instead of November. Financial uncertainty caused one-fifth of UK consumers to prioritize cost efficiency for their 2020 holiday celebrations, which could be one of many reasons why they chose to do their shopping preparations earlier than in previous years (Hillier, 2020). Finally, eBay's report indicates that 56% of UK consumers took up a new hobby or interest during the pandemic lockdown, and 75% continued it for at least the rest of 2020, meaning those interests will likely continue post Covid-19 (eBay advertising, 2020). Across Europe, consumers have said they look for retailers with visible safety measures such as enhanced cleaning and physical barriers, brands that have good hygienic packaging, demonstrate care and concern for employees, are reasonably priced, and guarantee quick delivery--trends that are expected to continue well beyond the pandemic (Buck et al., 2020).

3.2 Consumer preference changes in North America

3.2.1 The U.S.

In the U.S., Marketing Agency's CEO Darian Pickett argues that, as the pandemic stretches on, shoppers will witness a financial toll with millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996) being hit the hardest at 43% (Figure 4), and 38% of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) being worse off than before the pandemic (Acosta, 2020). The recession has significantly impacted shopping habits, where Influencer MarketingHub states that 62% of U.S. consumers say they shop online more now than pre-covid-19 (Davis & Toney, 2020). Acosta (2020) assures that low prices and promotions will be among the most important priorities for retailers and marketers although product availability remains the top concern among consumers. Acosta adds that nutrition and fitness have been difficult to maintain for many respondents during the pandemic, with 37% of shoppers exercising less, and 33% eating less healthy. Meanwhile, 32% of shoppers said they consumed more

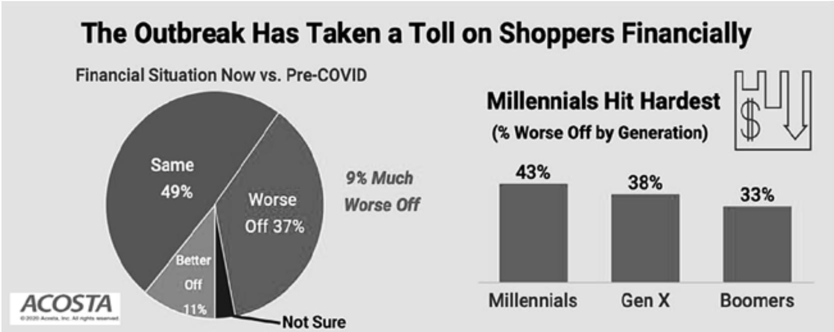

Figure 4

From "Impact on U.S. Shoppers." by G. Acosta 2020, *Retail Leader*.
https://retailleader.com/covid-19s-impact-us-shoppers

vitamins and supplements since the beginning of Covid-19, while 21% are eating more natural, organic or vegetarian foods (Acosta, 2020). Some of the shoppers' concerns Acosta notes were product availability (53%), social distancing (48%), low prices (45%), customer safety (43%) and availability of promotions (29%) as their top post-pandemic priorities. Acosta recommends that retailers meet these new consumer needs with product availability, supply chains, and SKU rationalization (an analytical process used to determine the merits of adding, retaining, or deleting items from a retailer's merchandise assortment). Similar to the UK, the U.S. has three main holiday periods where consumers shop the most--Amazon prime day, back to school day, and the year-end holidays. According to Digital Commerce 360 estimates, U.S. shoppers spent US$138.65 billion online during the 2019 holiday season, up 13.6% from 2018 (Freedman, 2020), and ecommerce sales were expected to rise to over US$690 billion for 2020 (Galov, 2020). The author suggests that retail and marketing companies create more effective product advertising campaigns for the aforementioned three holiday periods emphasizing antibacterial and cleanliness in order to ensure consumers feel safe about buying virus-free goods efficaciously during and after the pandemic.

Elsewhere, food delivery service companies have reported significant increases in business as a result of Covid-19. Kurimoto (2020) writes that, according to L.E.K. Consulting, the food delivery service market in the U.S. was worth US$53 billion in 2019, but by 2023, it is expected to grow to US$88 billion. Dining in has become the new way of dining out. Kurimoto adds that DoorDash now boasts the largest market share of food delivery in the U.S at 45%. Most food delivery services rely on *ghost kitchens*, a concept which originally began several years ago as a way to supplement in-restaurant business. Kurimoto claims that since the pandemic forced most restaurants to temporarily close, chefs from those ghost kitchens remain busy preparing their menus for the loss of in-restaurant business and tying up with delivery service companies such as GrubHub and Uber Eats to provide out-restaurant service. Adams (2020) states that companies such as Creating Culinary Communities (C3), a food hall and virtual kitchen subsidiary of hospitality company SBE Entertainment Group, had been hiring chefs and delivery staff to fill 138 new ghost kitchens by the end of 2020. Adams adds that although full-service restaurants are waiting to reopen their doors after mandated shut downs and expand into new areas, ghost kitchens make up for lost business and are naturally designed to support social-distancing which will likely continue in some capacity even after pandemic stay-at-home mandates are cleared.

3.2.2 Canada

In Canada, McKinsey and Company assures that regardless of increased pessimism towards the economy, a third of Canadians say they believe their finances will not be impacted by the pandemic, which had increased from 20% in May, 2020 (Charm et al., 2020). Despite that spending on discretionary item categories still remains below pre-Covid-19 levels, Charm et al., (2020) state that the economy has started to rebound across most categories, with consumers buying more masks, barriers, and cleaning procedures in-store, and increasing social activities. Regarding

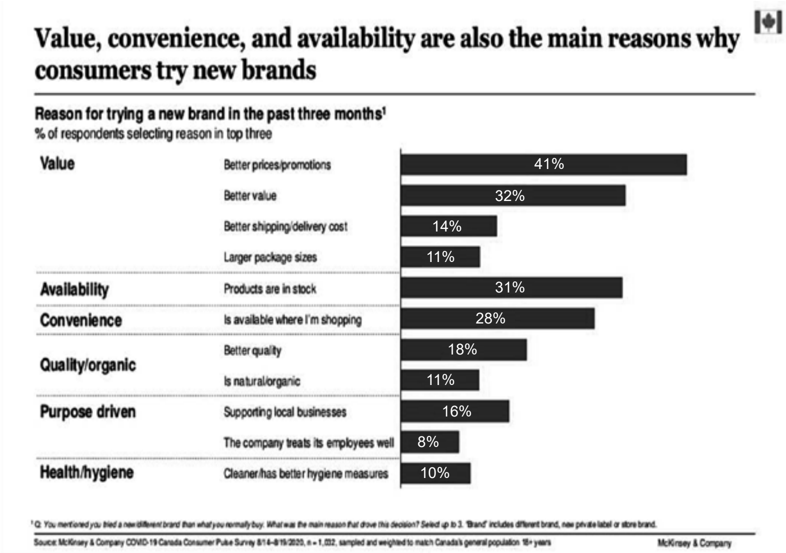

Figure 5

the main reasons why Canadians have tried new brands over the past several months, the McKinsey and Company Pulse Survey (Figure 5) revealed that 41% want better price promotions, 32% desire better value for their money, 31% prefer products in stock, 18% want better quality, and 10% desire cleaner products with better hygiene measures (Charm et al., 2020). Reasons why Canadians are shopping at new retailers, stores, or websites over the past several months, 19% noted they prefer better shipping, delivery costs and value, while 26% answered better delivery/pickup options. Meanwhile, 22% stated they desire easier access from home, 24% answered availability of products in stock, and 9% noted better quality (Charm et al., 2020).

3.3 Consumer preference changes in Asia.

3.3.1 China

The McKinsey and Company survey disclosed that 82% of consumers between the ages of 18 to 65 have discovered new methods of shopping for brands and stores, primarily driven by value, hygiene and convenience. Chinese consumers have also been shifting to online channels and adopting to remote learning and grocery delivery schemes among other digital activities, (Charm et al., 2020) while 41% engage in regular out-of-home activities. 32% use new digital shopping methods, 27% use different retailers, stores or websites, and 22% changed brands altogether. Marketers and retailers will benefit by focusing on effective and pertinent advertising and promotion campaigns that offer convenience, healthy and hygienic packaging, product availability, and value as consumers increase their digital and low-touch buying activities such as remote learning and online grocery delivery services from conventional in-store shopping (George, 2020).

3.3.2 Japan

One of the largest areas of consumer preference changes in Japan due to Covid-19 has been in the food industry. According to Fujikawa et al., (2020), Japanese citizens started preparing and eating at home more frequently due to telecommuting, school closures, and home seclusion after the pandemic began. This sparked a sudden growth of time-saving packaged food products, including frozen ready meals (Figure 6) and cooking sauces, which help consumers prepare meals faster and easier. Analysts predict that working from home will gain more widespread acceptance even during post Covid-19, and it is expected that, despite the small space of conventional Japanese homes, consumers will increasingly stock packaged foods such as Tabechoku (an online platform that sells produce in a package filled with goods from different prefectures each week) and other agricultural products sold directly from rural producers on a regular basis (Fujikawa et al., 2020). With the increase in home drinking, demand for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks such as iMuse Water by Kirin, is expected to continue increasing post Covid-19. Drinks with functional ingredients or health-boosting benefits are predicted to continue

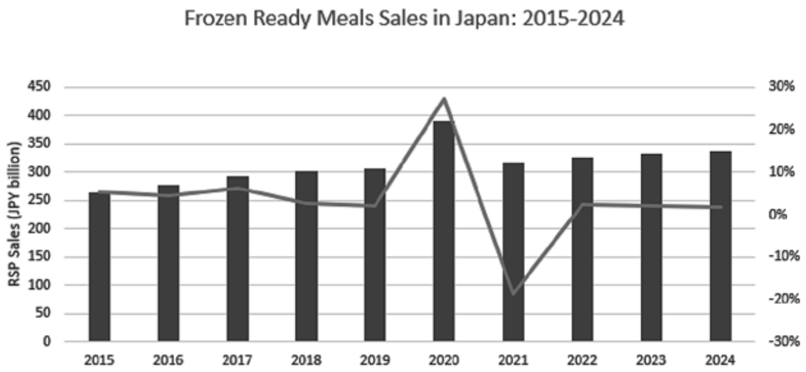

Figure 6 Source: Euromonitor International. Note: Historic current prices, forecast constant 2019 prices

Adapted from *The Consumer Impact of Coronavirus in Japan* by T. Fujikawa, Y. Goral, N. Hariya, S. Kimura, S. Kreidler, T. Kuniyoshi, M. Matsunaga, T. Yamato, June 22nd, 2020, Euromonitor International. https://blog.euromonitor.com/the-consumer-impact-of-coronavirus-in-japan/. Copyright 2020 by Euromonitor

selling well, while demand for products that are both healthy and refreshing are also expected to rise beyond the pandemic (Fujikawa et al., 2020).

Kurimoto (2020) writes that delivery service company Uber Eats, operated by Uber Technologies, has the second-largest food delivery service share in Japan. Kurimoto adds that Demae-can and other local startups have also made strong presence in the Japanese market by focusing on premium and popular restaurant food delivery and hiring higher-quality delivery staff. Line mail, a phone application service, invested 30 billion yen (US$280 million) to acquire 20% of Demae-can in 2019, and the company announced it will integrate its Line Delima food delivery service under the Demae-can brand name to make it easier for Line application users to register for the service (Kurimoto, 2020). Although Japanese chefs are not as keen on ghost kitchens and sharing their menus with operators as western chefs are, Kurimoto claims that enterprises such as Seven & i Food Systems, which operates Denny's and franchises 7-Eleven convenience store chains, opened a ghost kitchen in Tokyo in May, 2020. According to the Japan Foodservice Association, the combined sales at roughly 38,000 of its members' restaurants were down 22% in June from a year earlier, which was an improvement from April's steep 40% fall, but the phase three pandemic resurgence led to a further sales decline (Kurimoto, 2020). Kurimoto claims that Japan's food delivery market grew to about 150 billion yen by the end of 2020, and the survival of restaurants may depend on their ability to take advantage of delivery services to replace eating out with eating in. Retailers and marketers are expected to tailor their advertising campaigns for food delivery that emphasize speed, convenience, low costs, reliability, and safety (Kurimoto, 2020). The author predicts that advertising campaigns featuring "eat-in" will continue to be one of the common methods of promoting cuisine from patrons' favorite restaurants post Covid-19.

Elsewhere, Fujikawa et al., (2020) forecast that demand for fully automated combination electronics products, such as washing machines and dryers, automatic dishwashers, robotic vacuum cleaners (Figure 7) and time-saving small cooking

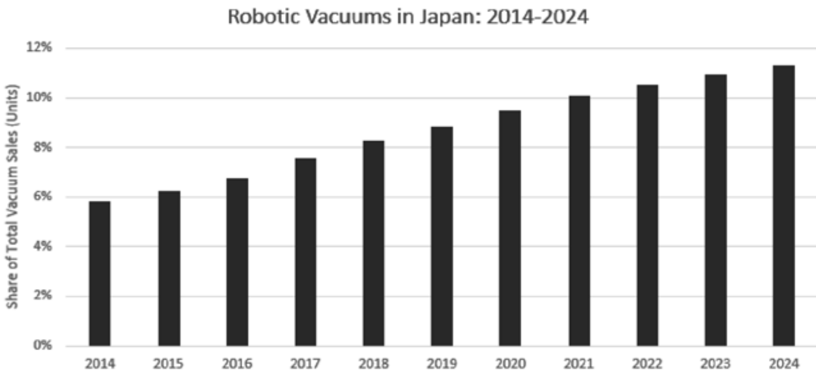

Figure 7 Source: Euromonitor International

Adapted from The Consumer Impact of *Coronavirus in Japan* by T. Fujikawa, Y. Goral, N. Hariya, S. Kimura, S. Kreidler, T. Kuniyoshi, M. Matsunaga, T. Yamato, June 22nd, 2020, Euromonitor International. https://blog.euromonitor.com/the-consumer-impact-of-coronavirus-in-japan/. Copyright 2020 by Euromonitor appliances, including bread makers and electric grills, will continue to grow as consumers make the best of their stay home experiences. Fujikawa et al. believe that telework has enhanced the sales of external monitors, printers, work desks/chairs and room air fresheners which are expected to continue well beyond the pandemic, while online sales, delivery, and take-out channels have grown as consumers become more familiar with online services such as restaurant delivery applications. Similarly, digital payment options are expected to soar from reduced indoor contact shopping practice. It will become increasingly important for Japanese retailers to reduce their dependence on marketplace platforms and strengthen usability of their own e-commerce sites to provide enhanced and smooth shopping experiences that keep customers engaged with their favorite brands (Fujikawa et al., 2020). Another trend that is expected to continue among Japanese consumers is their fetish about hygiene. The author believes that sales of cleaning products which have antibacterial sterilization ingredients will continue post Covid-19 as they did during and after the Escherichia coli O157:H7 infection in 1996, and the H1N1 Pandemic in 2009.

4. Covid-19 causes increase in online shopping

Survey results (Figure 8) by Sabanoglu (2020) indicate that, in 2019, retail e-commerce sales worldwide amounted to US$3.53 trillion, but e-retail revenues are predicted to climb to US$6.54 trillion in 2023, making online shopping one of the most popular activities worldwide. Kristensen (2020) states that, in 2014, total e-commerce sales reached just US$1.3 trillion, but that number more than tripled in 2020 to US$4.2 trillion, while projections show that global e-retail sales are expected to increase to US$4.9 trillion by 2021 and US$6.5 trillion by 2023. Kristensen listed several reasons why the Covid-19 pandemic ensures online shopping has become, and will continue to be, the most popular means of product purchasing from now on:

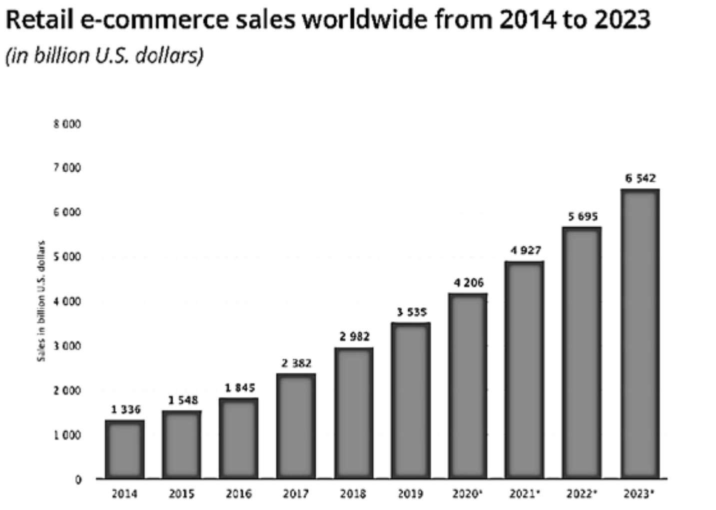

Figure 8

© Statista 2020

Adapted from *Retail e-commerce sales worldwide from 2014 to 2030* by T. Sabanoglu, 2020, Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/379046/worldwide-retail-e-commerce-sales/ Copyright 2020 by Statista.

1) E-Commerce sales are predicted to hit US$6.5 trillion by 2023

Within three years, experts have projected annual revenue to climb to US$6.5 trillion, and if this trend continues, Kristensen predicts e-commerce sales could reach US$8 trillion per year by 2025.

2) There were two billion online shoppers in 2020

In 2020, 26.3% of consumers shopped online. The number of shoppers climbed from 1.32 billion in 2014 to 2.05 billion in 2020.

3) 63% of shopping journeys start online

Perhaps one of the more interesting online shopping statistics is that more than six out of every 10 shopping experiences begin online whether the consumer buys from a brick-and-mortar store website or an e-commerce site. Kristensen advises marketing companies to invest in digital strategies such as search engine optimization (SEO) (a process of planning, outlining and implementing steps designed to improve search engine rankings), and social media, which help shoppers decide who they want to buy products from before making their final purchases.

4) Nearly 50% of world-wide e-commerce sales were made through mobile devices in 2020

Kristensen claims that consumers who made purchases through mobile devices increased by nearly 15% over the past four years. In 2017, only 34.5% of e-commerce sales were made via mobile devices, but that number rose to nearly 50% in 2020. This is expected to increase to 54% by the end of 2021.

5) Search and navigation is the most important site element for online shoppers

Data in 2020 from Statista revealed that 61% of consumers' most important attribute for doing online shopping was to have products made available that were easy to find through simple search and navigation means.

Davis & Toney (2020) state that social media usage has soared over the course of the pandemic due to lockdowns and people spending more time in isolated settings, thus tempting them to shop online. As a result, manufacturers, online retailers, marketers and advertising companies will have little choice but to reexamine their current advertising strategies in order to answer to consumer demands for safer, cleaner, antibacterial products that are less susceptible to attracting or spreading viruses (Echegaray, 2020).

5. Other changes that have already or are expected to occur from the pandemic

In a recent interview, Shingo Takeuchi, a salesperson and education specialist for Nikkei Media Promotions, Inc., claims that five key terms and their movements have grown in popularity throughout Japan since the onset of the pandemic, most of which already exist overseas and are expected to continue growing post Covid-19.

1) **Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR) technologies**
2) **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
3) **Remote Work**
4) **Alternative Office space**
5) **Address hopping and house sharing**

5.1 Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR) technologies

Gupton (2017); Kiger (2020) define AR as something which adds digital elements to a live view often by using the camera on a smartphone, such as Snapchat lenses and the game Pokemon Go. Cook et al., (2020) state that AR shopping enables customers to engage with brands and products via digital experiences that allow them to try on, try out, interact, or personalize their products virtually. These experiences help enable more detailed, intuitive product information than standard web experiences. Sheehan (2018) states that retailers across a number of industries have also integrated AR technology into the in-store or application experience, with 61% of consumers preferring AR experiences (Figure 9). Gupton & Kiger depict VR as something which implies a complete immersion experience and shuts out the physical world, including the transport into a number of real-world or imagined

Figure 9 Source: Sheehan (2018)

Adapted from *How These Retailers Use Augmented Reality to Enhance the Customer Experience* by A. Sheehan, February 21st, 2018, *Shopify*. https://www.shopify.com/retail/how-these-retailers-are-using-augmented-reality-to-enhance-the-customer-experience. Copyright 2018 by Shoptify

environments such as riding on the back of a dragon. Cook et al describe VR as a fully rendered digital environment which replaces the user's real-world environment and features body and motion tracking capabilities that are ideal for shopping. Gupton & Kiger explain that a mixed reality (MR) experience combines elements of both AR and VR, where real-world and digital objects interact. MR is the most recent technology, and is featured in Microsoft's HoloLens, one of the most notable early mixed reality apparatuses on the market (Gupton, 2017; Kiger, 2020).

London (2020) writes that AR and VR shopping experiences promote a wide variety of headsets, enabling consumers to view stores and products as though they were walking through aisles and handling products themselves. London notes there is a host of options from high-tech headsets and face masks, such as the HTC Vive Cosmos and Oculus Rift S (Figure 10), to mobile add-ons, such as the Samsung Gear VR, Google Daydream View, and the very simple Google Cardboard. There are numerous variations in technology utilized with each headset, including applications

Figure 10 HTC Vive Cosmos hands-on, engadget.com

Adapted from *The best virtual reality headsets you can buy in 2020* by L. London, April 1st, 2020, The Telegraph. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/0/best-virtual-reality-headsets-can-buy/. Copyright 2020 by The Telegraph

which consumers can purchase and the platforms that support them, while most hook up to consumers' computers so they can log into any department store and see their products at 360 degree angles (London, 2020). In Japan, Higginbottom (2020) claims that products such as PlayStation technology and computer sales have skyrocketed since the pandemic began because consumers can shop using the same headsets they would use to play video games. Higginbottom adds that the VR business was US$829 million in 2018, and is predicted to climb to US$4.26 billion by 2023, with primary reasons including:

・VR is being used for training, work meetings, and to provide better customer service during the pandemic.

・Facebook's VR headset maker recently released Oculus (a subsidiary brand of Facebook Inc.) for business platforms which is primarily aimed at commercial use.

・VR can also be used for online shopping.

In contrast, Brown (2020) writes that one of the main downfalls of AR, VR and

MR is that not everyone can afford them, and those who cannot buy into this new technology now will be left out. Brown advises that communication using this technology should not be replaced with face to face for any individual or group as it would be susceptible to dishonesty and promote a feeling of worthlessness as users feel they are escaping from the real world. Users can also become addicted to the virtual world and overuse the non-virtual environment which can cause permanent eye damage, dizziness, and seizures among other health issues (Brown, 2020). In the retail context, Scholz & Smith (2016) note that the aim of AR and VR is to create immersive brand experiences, interactive marketing campaigns, and innovative product experiences for consumers. Whatever the long-term outcome of AR, VR and MR is, the author believes it will play a significant role in future online shopping and business experiences as users can enjoy the convenience of these platforms while familiarizing themselves with them before the next global pandemic lockdown, but should heed the aforementioned health issues. Marketers and retailers need to monitor the rapid changes in consumer demands for speed, quantity, pricing and versatility while forecasting likely changes in the trends of AR and VR products in order to adapt their promotion campaigns and remain competitive (Moorhouse et al., 2017).

5.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to be a strong means of accommodating for global pandemics. Barnard Marr, author of the Intelligence Revolution (2020), writes that technological advancement through AI is one of the main reasons why the Covid-19 pandemic hasn't killed as many people as other pandemics, such as the 1918 Spanish Flu outbreak, which claimed up to 50 million lives (Marr, 2020). From advancements in medical to communication technologies that enabled outbreaks to be spotted more quickly and lockdowns imposed, in the near future, AI will no doubt enable people to more effectively deal with pandemics while expanding to other areas of healthcare. Facial recognition technology is another fast-growing area that uses AI, and Marr (2020) asserts that it is powered by computer vision algorithms which focus more on individual identification opposed to patterns among groups of people. Marr adds that this form of facial recognition is already being used by police to track the movements of individuals displaying Covid-19 symptoms within a crowd, and can better detect lockdown and quarantine-avoiders. A strong, steady trend towards AI digital technology can be seen through the sudden boom of company online platforms, including Microsoft's Teams and Zoom technology, while Amazon's sales during the second quarter of 2020 soured 40% compared to the same period in 2019 (Marr, 2020). Marr believes that companies which provide self-service access to AI technology will become more conspicuous throughout 2021 as small and medium-sized enterprises attempt to establish a foothold in this competitive and growing market.

5.3 Remote Work

5.3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages

Casey (2020) writes that the concept of remote work started in 1973 by NASA physicist Jack Nilles, and from the mid 1980's, several companies started allowing employees to work from home and the numbers dramatically soared after the invention of Wi-fi in 1991. As of a 2018, 70% of the world's population works remotely at least once a week while another 53% does at least half of the week (Casey, 2020). Remote work has enabled a majority of workers and students to continue their tasks from home or other venues in order to avoid spreading the virus. According to Ila (2020), this trend is expected to continue well after the pandemic, and the main advantage that remote work offers is it allows employees and students to complete projects wherever they are while enjoying more time with family, friends, or on vacation as they continue earning salaries and/or academic credits. Molla (2019) reports that results from Buffer's State of Remote Work survey indicate that 99% of respondents noted they would like to continue working remotely at least part of the time for the rest of their careers, and 95% would recommend it to others. On the other hand, Molla asserts that the most common downsides to remote work are the inability to unplug from it (22%), loneliness (19%), difficulty collaborating and communicating with colleagues and clients (17%), and distractions while working at home (10%) (Figure 11).

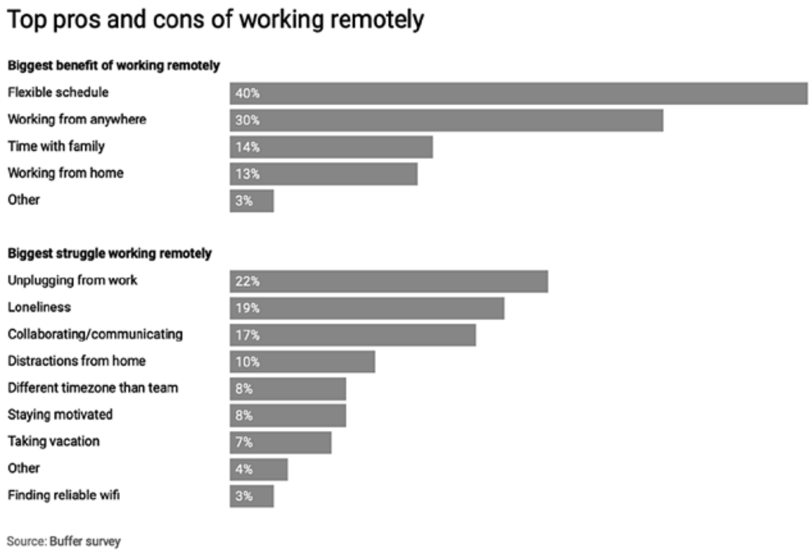

Figure 11

From *How remote work is quietly remaking our lives. Working from anywhere: the good, the bad, the lovely* by R. Molla, October 9th, 2019, Vox. https://www.vox.com/recode/2019/10/9/20885699/remote-work-from-anywhere-change-coworking-office-real-estate. Copyright 2019 by Buffer Survey

5.4 Alternative Office Space

Karaoke boxes in Japan, such as those found at Karaoke-kan, Big Echo, Adores, Joysound, Shidax and Round I, feature large screens, WiFi access, sound proof walls, and drink service bars. They have become one of the most popular alternatives for office space or escaping the home to do work or studies. According to Inada (2020), karaoke boxes allow patrons to rent rooms for several hours to do work in complete privacy away from any distractions. Daiichikosho Company has been promoting its 10,000 karaoke rooms for teleworkers for as little as US$5.00 an hour per person, including all-you-can-drink service (Inada, 2020). Some business people show up with whiteboards for planning task work and enhancing the feeling of an office atmosphere. Inada writes that Toshifumi Kawasaki, a planning manager at Daiichikosho, claims the company hopes to lure business people who would otherwise gather in restaurants or coffee shops, emphasizing it's a private space where patrons can talk freely on their phones, meet in small numbers, drink all they like, and do their work in a comfortable atmosphere with excellent ventilation. Other alternative office spaces include camping trailers, poolside areas, amusement park Ferris Wheels, coffee shops, and restaurants. Inada (2020) states that camping cars, many which are equipped like offices with Wi-Fi and what some call a work-cation, have rapidly grown in popularity. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga also noted the option of camping cars for office space in his inaugural policy address in October, 2020 as he promoted the go-to-travel campaign across the archipelago. Inada adds that slow-moving Ferris wheels offer adequate space, a nice view, and privacy. Yomiuriland park charges around US$18.00 for seven hours rental time for 11 open air poolside office spaces which come with a table, deck chairs and an electrical outlet. Open from 9:00am to 4:00pm, Inada reports that customers can bring their own computer and Wi-Fi devices while batteries are provided by the park. The park has been fully booked most days since it started the service from the middle of October, 2020 (Inada, 2020). Although the foregoing social venues were some of the worst to suffer financially at the onset of the pandemic, management has changed their strategy to think outside the box. Changing these venues to alternative office space for businesspeople has been one of the most successful ideas to compensate for lost business (Inada, 2020).

5.5 Address Hopping

Takeuchi (2020) states that one of the most unexpected post Covid-19 business possibilities on the horizon is the increase of what is termed “address hopping”. Primarily influenced by the concept of remote work, Takeuchi claims that people who do not have to commute to companies or schools on a regular basis and/or do not want to endure large mortgage loans can buy into housing rental programs offered by real-estate or housing corporations and randomly live in a variety of apartments, condominiums or older homes in any part of their country at any given time. In Japan, young people are forecast to purchase fewer houses and condominiums in the future and may rent from schemes that operate like resort time sharing services. Takeuchi believes that, similar to car sharing, this home sharing concept is another marketing idea where people may use their automobiles as offices to do remote work while traveling, and have the option of staying in a variety of apartments at discount rental fees offered by the foregoing companies across the archipelago. Takeuchi attests that low-end apartment rentals in the Tokyo area can be as high as 100,000 yen per month, but if housing companies offer optional units of the same size at much lower monthly fees, this could greatly appeal to remote workers and travelers. Real-estate and housing firms could offer dwellings in both urban and rural areas of Japan, and thanks to the evolution of remote work, Takeuchi believes they have discovered a new marketing niche that could lead to a variety of options well beyond the pandemic.

6. Methodology

The author conducted a quantitative survey entitled “Life after Covid”, in which 63 Japanese and foreign residents from various age groups, employment backgrounds and status from the central Tokai area of Japan responded to. The survey was carried out to assess how the participants’ lifestyles have changed since the beginning of the pandemic and what they think life will be like post Covid-19. 12 multiple choice questions were given to participants, including what they thought was/were the biggest change(s) in their social lives since the corona virus started, how their shopping habits have changed, how their work and study habits have changed, and what they think will be the biggest changes in society after the pandemic. Other questions included what venues respondents have been using as alternatives to their home, office and/or school to do work/study, how they speculate their dining out and other entertainment lifestyles will change post covid-19 opposed to before, how often they plan to do domestic and international travel post pandemic versus before, and what payment method(s) they use now and intend to use at stores in the future. The survey was conducted over a month using Microsoft Forms, and respondents ranged in ages from teens to 80 years.

7. Survey Results and Analysis

The largest age group (Figure 12) was late teens to 20 years (28 respondents or 44%), 13 (21%) between the ages of 21 and 40 years, and 11 (18%) between the ages of 41 to 80.

As indicated in Figure 13, 40 of the respondents were students followed by seven teachers and education office personnel, seven unemployed (housewives and retirees) and four company owners. Regarding shopping habits (Figure 14), 35 answered they have not made any significant changes since the onset of the lockdown, while 14 noted they shop more on line now, and 10 claimed they changed their routine shopping time. Finally, two answered they began making more frequent use of Co+Op and Uber Eats among other food delivery companies to have their favorite meals brought to their homes.

Figure 15 revealed that 29 (30%) of the respondents noted that they use coffee

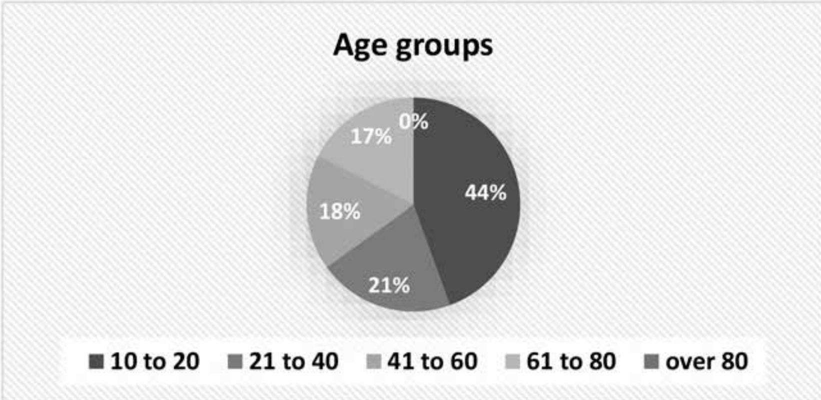

Figure 12

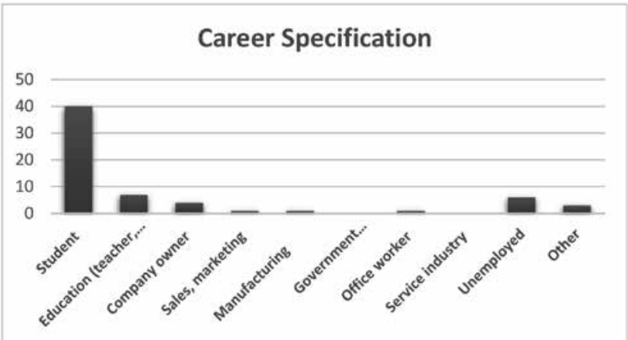

Figure 13

Figure 14

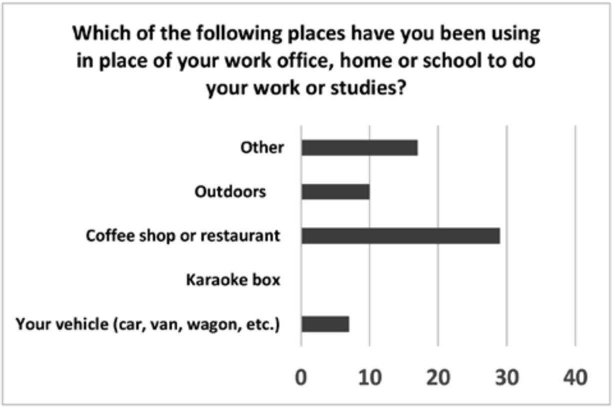

Figure 15

shops or family restaurants to do their work or studies, 10 noted outdoor locations such as parks or riverside areas, and 17 noted other, which included apartment or condominium verandas, or any areas that allowed them to be outdoors while maintaining social distance. Seven answered they use their automobiles as their preferred place of work/study instead of schools or offices, with other places including seating in mall or shopping center corridors among other large venues, and open yards or lots at friends' houses.

In regard to how respondents' work and education lifestyles have changed (Figure 16), over 38 (61%) answered they use remote more than in the past, 14 (22%) claimed they made no change and continue going to schools or offices even at the height of shutdowns. Seven (11%) noted they changed their way of commuting to work or school, with the majority indicating they drive, ride bicycles, or walk to those venues instead of using crowded public transportation. Two (3%) stated they either changed jobs or were laid off from their workplace.

When asked about how their dining out and other social habits have changed as a result of the pandemic (Figure 17), 31 respondents claimed they eat out less and avoid social events more than before the pandemic, while 24 noted they monitor their activities based on state of emergency warnings and shutdown regulations. Five confirmed they will change the times they eat out or attend crowded events while wearing masks and maintaining social distance during and after the pandemic.

Regarding domestic and overseas travel (Figure 18), nearly 28 (44%) respondents claimed they have decreased both from the onset of the pandemic, 23 (37%) noted other (they won't travel anywhere during the pandemic despite the "go to travel" and "go to eat" campaign incentives), seven (11%) claimed they will increase both domestic and overseas travel (particularly post Covid-19) while five (8%) stated they will only increase domestic travel and decrease overseas travel both during and after the pandemic.

As for product and service payment plans (Figure 19), 28 (44%) of respondents said they will use e-Wallet payment plans through their mobile phones more often during and after the pandemic, while 24 (38%) answered they will pay for things more with credit, debit or prepaid cards as opposed to using cash or eWallet payment schemes, and 10 (16%) will continue using currency to pay for items and services.

Lastly, in regards to how respondents think their and other peoples' actions will change the most during and after the pandemic (Figure 20), 21 respondents noted that less human contact and the continuation of social distance will perpetuate, 18 believe people will continue using online services and remote work in post Covid-19, 12 answered they will only attend social events online and wear masks outside their homes on a regular basis, and eight noted they will continue using food and product delivery services in place of frequenting bricks-and-mortar shopping centers or malls.

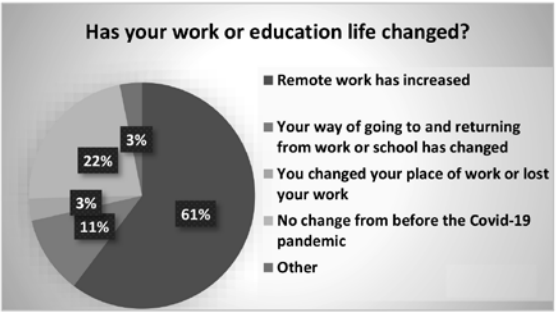

Figure 16

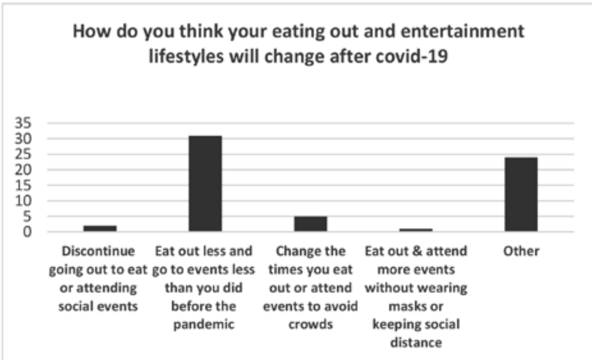

Figure 17

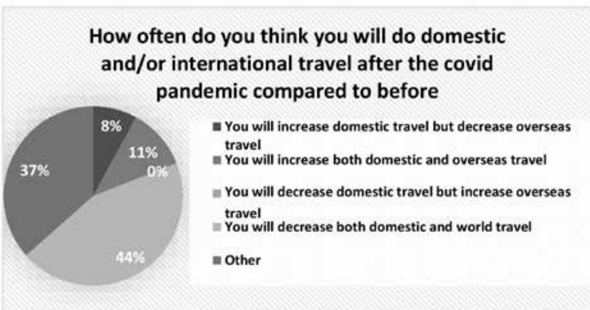

Figure 18

Figure 19

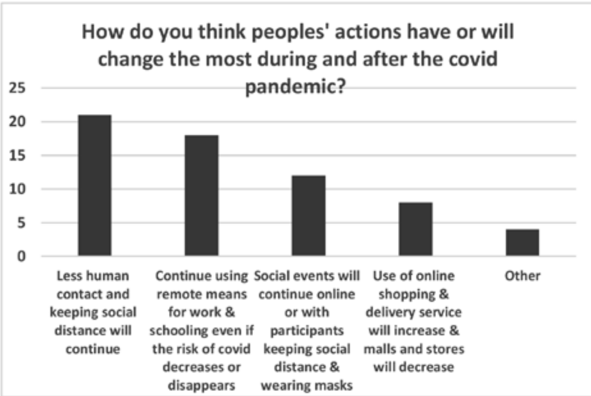

Figure 20

8. Discussion

The terrible aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic has forced citizens around the world to change their lifestyles and discover new means of coping with it. The study highlights the ways people have accomplished this, including changing the way they greet others, increasing their use of remote work and study, moving away from bricks-and-mortar stores to buying online and using home delivery services, increasing eat-in versus eat-out, and diversifying their product preferences to those driven by value, hygiene, availability and convenience. These rapid changes have forced marketing and retail companies to reevaluate their promotion strategies to remain competitive. The research results emphasize a correlation between values, lifestyles, preferences and expectations among consumers from three different continents, Europe, North America, and Asia, and how those issues may continue post Covid-19. The research also draws attention to trends that have become more prominent since the onset of the pandemic, including mixed reality (MR), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), the sudden increase of remote work/study, alternative office space, and address hopping, many of which are expected to continue post pandemic. Future assessment of how consumers will react to the aforementioned trends will be necessary for marketers and retailers to tailor their promotion strategies when needed.

The survey results conducted by the author unveiled several differences compared to overseas sources regarding changes in lifestyles from the onset of the pandemic and predictions of how those changes may continue post-Covid-19. Results from North America and Europe indicated that consumers are shopping less in bricks-and-mortar stores and buying more online, whereas the author's survey results showed a majority of Japanese respondents expressed less desire to move away from conventional in-store shopping routines and only changing the times they go shopping. One reason for this could have been that the majority of respondents were young adults who tend to show less fear of catching the virus. Meanwhile, respondents from both studies showed a decrease in their desire to eat out opposed to eating at home, making use of food delivery service companies such as Uber Eats, CO+OP and GrubHub in order to avoid crowded venues while enjoying their favorite restaurant cuisines at home. Further post Covid-19 research into how these trends will continue is suggested for marketers to assess changes in consumer demands regarding online shopping and food delivery services.

Despite that remote work and study greatly reduce the risks of spreading pandemics while curtailing transportation costs and commuting times, research indicates that it also exacerbates loneliness and the realization of being unable to unplug from work and studies, leading to depression, the potential for domestic violence and, in some cases, suicide (Kawohl & Nordt, 2020). In addition, remote work/study also limits the amount of exercise people get from not having to commute to and from work or schools, thus leading to a decline in physical health (Grant et al., 2013). Parakala (2020) writes that the pandemic will force companies to take radical steps to adopt technology advancements, organisational structures, measurement systems and operating architectures to promote effective healthcare in order to counterbalance the negative effects from remote work/study. As a result of the increase in remote work/study, domestic research exposed some unique spinoff ideas for marketers, such as the improvisation of work places, including karaoke boxes, poolside spaces, restaurants and coffee shops, etc., which have become popular as managers of these venues make vigorous effort to make up for lost business. Another idea noted in the study is address hopping, which, according to Takeuchi (2020), could become commonplace in the future as younger Japanese show less interest in taking on large mortgage debt and more interest in traveling while taking advantage of remote work/study options. Although this trend could lead to future business for real-estate and home building companies, the author’s survey did not reveal a strong awareness or interest among Japanese to pursue this idea at present. Nevertheless, Takeuchi (2020) strongly believes that monitorization of this trend does merit value for the foregoing companies in the post pandemic era.

Both outside sources and the author’s survey respondents illustrate that most have been and will continue using eWallet and other mobile payment schemes instead of cash to curtail the spread of covid-19. Research evidence indicates that these payment options will steadily increase in the future. Lee (2020) writes that millennials are the ones leading the charge toward a cashless future, noting that one-in-10 use their digital mobile wallets for every purchase and about 34% of adults under the age of 50 in the US make cashless purchases in a typical week.

Regarding domestic and international travel, most domestic and overseas survey respondents indicated they have cancelled all travel plans (especially Japanese) after the postponement of the country's "Go To Eat" and "Go to Travel" campaigns. Meanwhile, some respondents have indicating they may continue limiting overseas travel in the post pandemic era. Marketing strategies for the promotion of domestic and overseas travel may have to wait until after the pandemic although travel is known to rebound quickly in post pandemic eras.

9. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic spread across the globe in 2020 causing significant and rapid changes in human behavior, the world economy, and the way we work, shop, and entertain ourselves. Some of the biggest changes found in this study were the increases in remote work/study, online shopping, eating in versus eating out and the subsequent use of food delivery companies, and mobile payment schemes. The most obvious decreases found in the research were human contact, social entertainment in the form of indoor concerts, karaoke, social clubs, parties, and domestic and overseas travel. The pandemic has caused consumers to reevaluate their product and service preferences and prioritize the items they need most, including groceries, medical supplies, and other daily necessities. Consumers are also demanding goods and services which guarantee visible safety measures (enhanced cleaning and less physical barriers), offer hygienic packaging, demonstrate care and concern for employees, are reasonably priced, and boast quick delivery. Rapid transitions in consumer choices have meant marketers and retailers need to reexamine and adapt their promotion campaign strategies to accommodate these trends in order to remain competitive both during and after the pandemic. Carr (2020) states that as demand for nonessential items and travel dropped, other products such as webcams, AR and VR headsets, software products, computer monitors for remote students and workers, and home entertainment systems showed heightened demand. Although results from the author’s survey do indicate a growing trend of online shoppers in Japan, they do not reflect as rapid a change as those found in studies from North America and Europe. In contrast, both overseas and local surveys revealed increases in the use of food delivery services to compensate for the trend of eating in versus eating out as lockdowns restrict movement in order to curtail the spread of the virus. Experts speculate that this trend will continue post Covid-19, emphasizing the need for attractive advertising campaigns for food delivery companies which primarily emphasize cleanliness, efficient delivery and discount incentives.

The study also highlighted the popularity of several items and trends since the onset of the pandemic, including increased sales of AR, VR, MR, and AI products, and the use of remote work, alternative office space, and address hopping, most of which are expected to continue growing throughout Japan and the rest of the world post Covid-19. Increases in sales of AR, VR, MR equipment and home game entertainment were primarily influenced by lockdowns and social distancing, which further enhanced the need for remote work and study, and a sharp rise in online shopping. Although lockdowns and subsequent remote work and study have reduced viral spread, work commuting time and transportation expenses, it has also led to cases of mental and physical health issues, including depression, loneliness and domestic violence. Many people have alleviated these problems by using alternative office or study spaces, such as karaoke boxes, restaurants, cafes and automobiles. Sources note that remote work and alternative office space have also led to another potential trend in Japan entitled address hopping, where remote workers contract with real-estate and home building companies to rent places nationwide, allowing them to complete their work or studies while traveling around the archipelago.

Progress in AI is expected to become more effective in dealing with pandemics while expanding to areas of healthcare. AR, VR and AI among other advancing technology will become the norm in post Covid-19, and eWallet among other mobile payment programs is expected to grow rapidly in order to curtail viral spread through use of hard currency. Companies which boast products and services that guarantee excellent hygiene, reliability, quick delivery and convenience are expected to be leaders in the post pandemic era. Arora et al., (2020) suggest that marketers will need to rethink their media mix across a larger set of channels including AR, VR, videoconferencing platforms, and video games which navigate a “homebody economy” while keeping up with consumer demands in order to remain competitive throughout the future.

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11. Appendix

Questions from author's survey content

1) Specify your age group
2) Specify your area of work
3) What is the biggest change in your lifestyle since the corona virus started?
4) How have your shopping habits changed since the onset of the pandemic?
5) Has your work or education life changed since the onset of the pandemic?
6) Which of the following places have you been using in place of your work office, home or school to do your work or studies?
7) Address hopping (not purchasing a residence but buying into a plan to rent from several options including apartments, condos, etc.) is predicted to increase in the future after the pandemic. How to you expect your situation to change? Would you consider this option?
8) How do you think your eating out and other entertainment lifestyles will change after the pandemic?
9) How much more domestic and/or international travel do you think you will do after the pandemic compared to before?
10) How do you think payments for items or service will change in the future?
11) How do you think peoples' actions have or will change during and after the pandemic?