

## A Research on Tesco's Consumer Purchasing Behavior towards E-Commerce during the Pandemic Period

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### ARTICLE INFORMATION

#### Publication Information

#### Research Article

#### HOW TO CITE

Utama, A. A. G. S., Verma, M., Ng, J. Y., Kee, D. M. H., Nga, C. S., Izzati, N. N. . . . Khoiruwania, F. (2022). *International Journal of Accounting & Finance in Asia Pasific*, 5(1), 53-63.

#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/ijafap.v5i1.1415>

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Received: 17 December 2021

Accepted: 25 January 2022

Published: 21 February 2022

### ABSTRACT

During the pandemic period, people nowadays have two shopping choices, either online or shopping at physical stores. The research was conducted to investigate the impact of the rising of E-commerce during the pandemic period against Tesco consumer purchasing behavior. Three hypotheses are carried out to determine the direction of this research. This research was conducted by having a survey with 100 eligible respondents. Descriptive analysis, regression analysis, and other tests were summarized to determine the relationships of the three hypothesis. The findings indicate that social need, convenience, and business performance have a simultaneous effect on consumer purchasing behavior. Consumer purchasing behavior was statistically associated with convenience and business performance.

**Keywords:** Business Performance, Consumer Purchasing Behavior, Convenience, E-Commerce, Social Need

**JEL Classification:** M00, M19, M20

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tesco PLC (Tesco) is one of the companies in the retail industry founded by Jack Cohen in London in 1919. Nowadays, Tesco has become the third-largest retail company in the world. Tesco had involved multiple business areas that began with the sale of food and gradually extended to clothing, electrical appliances, retailing, banking, insurance services, customer financial services, and others. The company has its general headquarter in the United Kingdom, and expanded rapidly in more than 15 countries in the world, such as France, Hungary, Poland, Ireland, China, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand.

In addition to its long history, wide business area and large scale, Tesco's success factors rely on its innovative operating strategy and effective operating management (Zhao, 2014). For instance, Tesco has conducted its business into four types of store formats based on external factors of the company. The types of store formats are Extra, Superstores, Metro, and Express. These favorable conditions allow the company to occupy a place in the world retail industry. Tesco is the advanced grocery retailer with a market share of around 27% in the United Kingdom, and it has been classified as one of the large four supermarkets together with Morrisons, Asda, and Sainsbury's (Statista, 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 has become the latest history for human civilization because it directly damaged the whole world economy as never happened before. The covid-19 pandemic had led to the enforcement of stringent rules like one-meter social distancing and lockdown of an area throughout the global and these rules have widely influenced the retail industry (Xu, Elomri, Kerbache, & el Omri, 2020). Tesco inevitably becomes one of the companies in the retailing industry. Jung and Jeon (2021) opined that "the pandemic has seriously affected the retail sectors such as consumer behavior, product demand, retail store, and factory and logistics services availability" (p.79). The Covid-19 led people to spend their time at home and have less direct communication with others (Sayyida, Hartini, Gunawan, & Husin, 2021). This situation encourages people to take advantage of online channels to conduct various activities because people need to reduce face-to-face contact with others during the pandemic period.

Therefore, e-commerce started rising rapidly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Kabugumila, Lushakuzi, and Mtui (2016), defined e-commerce as "the conduct of commerce in goods and services, with the support of telecommunication and telecommunication-based tools such as the Internet" (p. 243). E-commerce offers a broader selection of goods and services that allows customers to access the global market, by which they can search for the prices comparison, products description, and benefits across countries (Khan, 2016). It also provides a simple and convenient online payment system with flexible payment methods between consumers and marketers (Fatonah et al., 2018). However, the importance of e-commerce for the current Covid-19 pandemic situation is to reduce face-to-face interaction between the marketers and the customers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, this research aims to identify and understand the impact of e-commerce during Covid-19 to Tesco on consumer behavior.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Antecedents of Retail Stores**

#### ***Development and Performance of Retail Stores during the Pandemic Period***

As covid-19 has a major impact on every sector of the world, retail trade development is also affected. Covid-19 has owed to the product within the retail sector. This is in

consideration of the improvement of business structure. It is identified how this pandemic has helped retailers be innovative (Erokhin & Gao, 2020). Tesco made an effort to do its best to operate and fulfil the customers' satisfaction during the pandemic period. "Their selfless efforts, coupled with our inherent strategic advantages in stores and online, help confirm that everyone can get the food they need in a safe environment", said Tesco CEO Dave Lewis. In only five weeks, Tesco's employees have doubled their online capability to support their customers and transform their stores through social distancing measures so that every customer can shop safely.

### ***Retail Stores' Development through E-Commerce and Delivery during the Pandemic Period***

With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, many companies (including Tesco) have begun to operate through e-commerce. According to the journal of the Organisation for Economics Co-operation and Development (OECD) on 7 October 2020, the demand has shifted from brick-and-mortar retail to e-commerce. As the strict restrictions social distancing to avoid contagion, traditional physical retail businesses almost suspended, and they began to operate through e-commerce (OECD, 2020). According to Rigby (2021), Tesco e-commerce was growing up almost 22% after lockdown expansion with increased delivery capacity during last spring's first lockdown. Julia Herzberg, the social media manager, said that Tesco is another retailer that has been rewarded by adapting to customers' online shopping preferences during the pandemic (Brzezicki, Bombeeck, & Bridge, 2021). Tesco has increased its online delivery capacity to 1.5 million slots per week, and by the end of August 2020, online sales had increased by nearly 70% year-on-year.

### ***Customer Satisfaction and Behavior of E-Commerce of Retail Stores***

Customer satisfaction refers to how customers are satisfied with company's services and products. It encourages customer loyalty (Wattimena & Sin, 2020). When consumers are affected to purchase a product or service, some potential root causes are based on their behavior (Tham, Dastane, Johari, & Ismail, 2019). Since consumers cannot go out to buy goods during the Covid-19, they have to buy daily necessities through e-commerce at home. Some people have no income as they could not go out to work during the epidemic, which will also affect their purchasing behavior. Tesco CEO Ken Murphy said: "The first half of this year has tested our business in a way we have never imagined. Tesco colleagues have performed well in every challenge and have always served our customers and acted in the best interests of the local community." In these uncertain times, colleagues in Tesco performed well to create more value for their customers and fulfil customers' safety and satisfaction. They were pleased to serve their customers.

### ***Determinants of Consumer Behavior***

#### ***Consumer Purchasing Behavior***

Solomon (1995) described consumer purchasing behavior as individuals and groups wanting to satisfy their requirements by buying, using, and disposing of things or services. Schiffman and Kanuk (1999) suggested a similar description of consumer buying behavior, describing it as "the behavior that consumers express when they choose and obtain products or services utilizing their available resources to meet their requirements and wants". In the meantime, there are several impacts of e-commerce on consumer purchasing behavior in terms of social need, convenience, and business behavior.

#### ***Social Needs***

Social needs are humans' basic requirements that demonstrate that they are social creatures. Love, connection, friendship, and belonging are all important social needs.

These needs motivate people to interact with one another, generating a sense of community and camaraderie. Social wants, or the need for love and belonging, are on the third tier (Abraham Maslow's psychological Hierarchy of Needs). Social needs become one of the elements that contribute to consumer purchasing behavior. Humans tend to emulate one another to fit in with society. As a result, other people's purchasing decisions impact them. Family, peer groups, roles, and status are all social variables. People establish preferences through observing their families buy things as children, and they continue to buy the same products as adults. In general, everyone in the reference group buys in the same way and influences one another. As a result, this led to the following hypothesis:

H1: Social needs are positively related to Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior.

### ***Convenience***

Convenience is a consumer item widely available and purchased frequently with minimum effort. In addition, the idea of convenience is based on the consumer evaluation of service experiences. Thus, convenience plays a significant role in marketing as it is one of the elements that may provide added value to consumers. Convenience also influences the enjoyment of consumers toward e-commerce. Therefore, the increased perception of one's convenience will improve the enjoyment and purchasing behavior of consumers in e-commerce. We hypothesized that:

H2: Convenience is positively related to Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior.

### ***Business Performance***

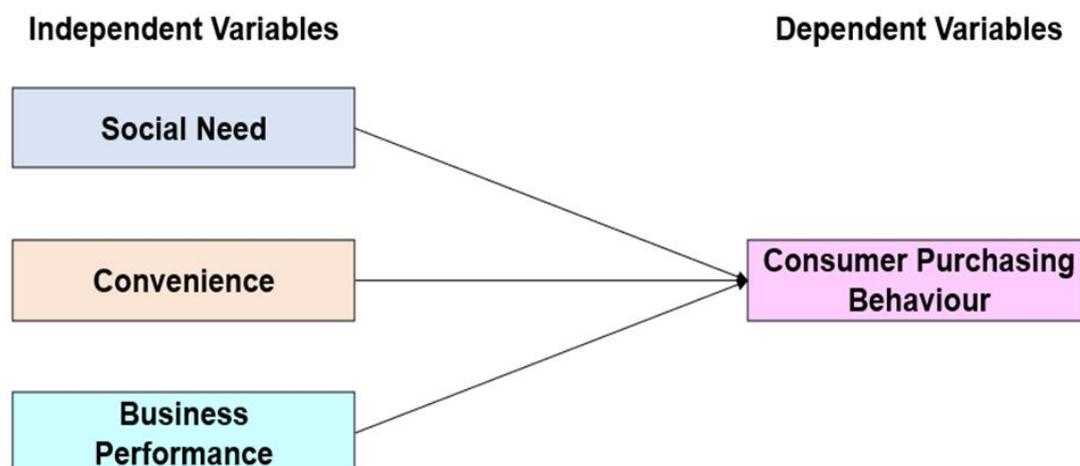
Business performance is the capability of a business to implement optimal organization to offer a product or service that satisfies and meets the needs of consumers. Business performance can be considered an idea used to measure the success degree of business management affected by entrepreneurship orientation, market orientation, business innovation, and competitive advantage. Besides, business performance is the achievement measurements of a business gained through the overall production and marketing activities from business organizations. It is also suggested as an idea used in measuring up to where market achievement has been achieved by a product of a business organization. Many factors can influence business performance.

According to Matsuno, Mentzer, and Özsoy (2002), entrepreneurship orientation is a factor that contributes to improving business performance. According to Maydeu-Olivares and Lado (2003), market orientation is capable of giving influence directly through mediating business and economic performance. Innovation is also a vital factor in the formation of optimal performance (Price, Lizé, Marcello, & Bretman, 2013). In addition to entrepreneurship orientation, market orientation and innovation, optimum business performance must also be supported by competitive advantage (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: Business performance is negatively related to Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior.

Figure 1 presents the research framework of this research.

Figure 1. Research Framework



### RESEARCH METHOD

We conducted a survey form and collected responses from 100 respondents from Malaysia, Indonesia, and China. This survey aimed to examine the influence of the independent variable, which is social needs, convenience, and business performance, on the dependent variable, which is consumer purchasing behavior. Before the respondents answered the survey form, we made sure that they were familiar with Tesco. Therefore, 100 respondents of our survey were Tesco's customers.

In this survey, common tools were surveys and questionnaires where those respondents were encouraged to express their opinion or thought. Scales used in this survey can evaluate the subject against a predetermined standard (Meadows, 2003). In fact, questionnaires are a popular tool to collect data, it allows respondents to have equal access and anonymity. A questionnaire structure should follow the guidelines, with the first section gathering respondent's information using short questions or optional questions to enable respondents to engage with the format (Jackson & Furnham, 1999). Therefore, in our survey form, if the respondent knows about Tesco, they will proceed with the survey with answering demographic questions first and continue with questions related to this research's aim.

### RESULTS

Most of our respondents were female, 71% overall. Respondents of this survey mainly fell within 21-29 years old (51%) or 20 years old and below (33%), and the majority were students (74%). Therefore, 75% of the respondents earned less than RM1500 every month. By nationality, 89% of Malaysians took this survey, 10% of Indonesian and 1% of respondents were from China. Half of the total respondents are Malays, one-third of Chinese, 7% of Indian, 6% of Indonesian and the rest consists of Punjabis, Siamese, Eurasian, and Javanese. Table 1 summarises the demographic details of the respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Demography (N = 100)

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	71	71

Male	29	29
<b>Age</b>		
20 years old and below	33	33
21-29 years old	51	51
30-39 years old	10	10
40-49 years old	4	4
50 years old and above	2	2
<b>Race</b>		
Malay	50	50
Chinese	33	33
Indian	7	7
Indonesian	6	6
Punjabi	1	1
Siamese	1	1
Eurasia	1	1
Javanese	1	1
<b>Nationality</b>		
Malaysian	89	89
Indonesian	10	10
China	1	1
<b>Status</b>		
Student	74	74
Employed	22	22
Unemployed	4	4
<b>Monthly Income Level</b>		
Less than RM 1500	75	75
RM 1500 RM 2500	9	9
RM 2500 RM 3500	7	7
Above RM 3500	9	9

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha and Correlations of all the research variables.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients, and Zero-Order Correlations of Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
<b>1. SN</b>	<b>0.845</b>			
<b>2. C</b>	** 0.324"	<b>0.760</b>		
<b>3. BP</b>	0.405"	0.561"	<b>0.835</b>	
<b>4. CPB</b>	0.105	0.123	-0.19	<b>1.000</b>
<b>Number of item</b>	6	3	5	1
<b>Mean</b>	4.6000	4.7767	4.2700	4.7400
<b>Standard</b>	0.4557	0.3880	0.5801	0.6760

<b>Deviation</b>				
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Note:  $N = 100$ ;  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $***p < .001$

Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha; SN = Social Need; C = Convenience; BP = Business Performance; CPB = Consumer Purchasing Behavior; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

In this research, the first variable (social need) used 6 items, the second (convenience) and third variable (business performance) used 3 items and 5 items consecutively. Consumer purchasing behavior as the fourth variable only used one variable. A total of 15 items in four variables have been asked to the respondents in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for social needs ( $\alpha = 0.845$ ), convenience ( $\alpha = 0.760$ ), and business performance ( $\alpha = 0.835$ ) explained that the relationships between all items in each variable are strong. Moreover, the correlation coefficient is within the range of -0.190 to 0.561. It is positively related to all items in each variable.

Table 3 shows that the hypotheses have been tested using regression analysis which means that the social need, convenience and business performance were entered as independent variables, while customer satisfaction was entered as the dependent variable.

**Table 3.** Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

<b>Tesco's Consumer Purchasing Behavior towards E-commerce (<math>R^2</math> change = 0.116)</b>	<b>Beta</b>
Social Need	0.175
Convenience	0.224*
Business Performance	-0.353*
$R^2$	0.116
F value	4.203
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.877

Note:  $N = 100$ ;  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $***p < .001$

Table 3 shows that the value of  $R^2$  is 0.116, which means only 11.6% of the variation in Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce can be explained by convenience and business performance. Consumer purchasing behavior was shown to be statistically associated with convenience and business performance. Therefore, convenience has a positive relationship with consumer purchasing behavior with a beta value of 0.224. Thus, H2 is proven. However, business performance has a negative relationship with consumer purchasing behavior with a beta value of -0.353. Thus, H3 is proven. This research identifies that business performance is the main factor affecting Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior on E-commerce followed by convenience. Social need does not significantly influence customer satisfaction towards E-commerce in Malaysia. Thus, H1 is not proven.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the regression analysis, the  $\beta$  value of 0.224\* underlined that convenience significantly affected Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce. Firstly, E-commerce allows customers to use anywhere and anytime to provide convenience for consumers. This is important for consumers because their desire for convenience increases because they spend less time shopping than other interests. In

addition, E-commerce also provided a simple and convenient online payment system with flexible payment methods during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, they have switched their attention to online shopping rather than visiting brick-and-mortar stores (Duarte, Silva, & Ferreira, 2018). Hence, there is a positive relationship between convenience and Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce.

The findings indicate that the business performance significantly affects Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce. According Abbas and Yaqoob (2009), employee performance is the important factor that will increase the overall organization's performance. However, some untrained workers are not attentive enough at work and do not know how to communicate with customers correctly. This bad service quality and employee attitude lead customers to be reluctant to conduct physical transactions and choose e-commerce to purchase Tesco products. Therefore, the bad employee performance will decrease the business performance, but the purchasing behavior of consumers through e-commerce has risen. This is because consumers do not have to face interaction with employees. Hence, there is a negative relationship between business performance and Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce.

This research reveals that social needs do not influence Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce. This is because there are only seven main factors that influence consumers' willingness to buy products through E-commerce: price, availability, social proof, scarcity, product detail, conditions, and social media activity (Bucko, Kakalejčík, & Ferencová, 2018). Social need is not one of the factors. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between social need and Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce.

Our findings recommend Tesco company to build better experience and customer satisfaction in the long run. Consumer satisfaction is a key factor in the online industry, and consumer satisfaction plays a vital role in shopping from e-commerce (Rao, Saleem, Saeed, & Ul Haq, 2021). The employees of Tesco can provide a good service and assistance to fulfil their customers' requirements, and they can also provide a better experience to satisfy their customers during a pandemic period. Therefore, consumers are more confident in Tesco's service performance and become satisfied consumers in the long run. The better experience of buying their goods makes customers easier and more comfortable shopping in Tesco e-shop than others even amid pandemic and builds a long-term good relationship between Tesco and customers. Therefore, online providers should focus on satisfying their consumers because it plays an extraordinary role in retaining consumers (Rao et al., 2021).

Besides, improving e-commerce convenience, business performance, and delivery service is crucial to recognize that the time consumers spend in the digital environment has significantly increased in self-isolation mode, which leads to a reduction in the cost of attracting customers, so innovative entrepreneurs need to take this advantage to improve their websites (Gu, ŚLusarczyk, Hajizada, Kovalyova, & Sakhbieva, 2021). E-commerce provides companies with better product promotion and distribution channels, as well as new ways to measure customer preferences (Šaković Jovanović, Vujadinović, Mitreva, Fragassa, & Vujović, 2020). Tesco can improve the websites of their e-commerce, which add new ways to measure their customer preference, and often make the latest announcement of promotion on e-commerce websites or send notifications to their customers' handphones. Therefore, Tesco can improve delivery service efficiency to enable employees to work efficiently in delivery to fulfill customers' needs and requirements quickly.

Improving the employee's performance to service customers through education and spread techniques is of importance. Establishing employee engagement measures with the help of technology is critical to the development of the organization (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020). Proactive technical distribution and training (through education and spread techniques) as the continuous technique propagation is more reliable than advocating technical equities. People are playing dual roles as a learner and a secondary tutor. Workers' passion and preparedness change could maintain a good performance (Kamar, Novitasari, Asbari, Winanti, & Goestjahjanti, 2020). Tesco can provide some education to practice their employees to improve their skills and work performance. Thus, the well-trained workers will provide customers with better services, understand their needs, and have the ability to solve customer problems. In e-commerce, hardworking workers with good communication skills can also build customer confidence and maintain a good relationship between Tesco and customers.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research aims to examine social need, convenience, and business performance on consumer purchasing behavior. The results prove that the variables of social need, convenience, and business performance have a simultaneous effect on consumer purchasing behavior. Consumer purchasing behavior was statistically associated with convenience and business performance. The variable of convenience has a positive relationship with consumer purchasing behavior. The variable of business performance has a negative relationship with consumer purchasing behavior. The social need did not significantly influence customer satisfaction.

This research implies that business performance is the main factor that will affect Tesco's consumer purchasing behavior towards E-commerce followed by convenience. The practical implication of this research is that this research can contribute to determining the impact of the rise of e-commerce during the pandemic period. In addition, this research can contribute to strengthening existing research.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

N/A

### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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