

Psychological analysis into consumer luxury shopping behavior in China during and after the Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

In a sample of 200 Chinese consumers of luxury brands, this research explores the associations between shopping behavior in luxury products and consumers' psychological traits and changes thereof before and after the pandemic. An online questionnaire with approx. 40 questions assessed social and growth needs, social status motivation and delay of gratification as well as demographic variables and shopping behavior in respondents from Shanghai. The scores were retrospectively collected for the time before the pandemic and the time after the lockdowns were lifted. Major findings included a confirmation of similar shopping patterns of males and females, a significant drop in reported shopping after the lockdowns were lifted regardless of age or gender, and a decreased shopping behavior in the youngest age group (up to 29 years old) compared to all other ages in non-pandemic times. Moreover, high social status motivation was associated with less brand shopping, while for respondents with high delay of gratification scores more shopping was reported before but not after the pandemic. Implications for marketing luxury products include dealing with a cautious consumer clientele that behaves differently depending on psychological traits. Consumers who had suffered severe economic or emotional impact or those with high levels of delay of gratification are unlikely to go on shopping frenzies any time soon after restrictions end. More longitudinal data, intra-individual follow-up and objective shopping data collection are the core suggestions for further research in this topic.