

Has the COVID-19 Pandemic Made Us More Materialistic? The Effect of COVID-19 and
Lockdown Restrictions on the Endorsement of Materialism

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in the factors that typically facilitate the endorsement of materialistic values (e.g., higher media consumption, stress and anxiety, loneliness, death anxiety, and lower moods). In this paper, we examine how contextual changes affecting the antecedents of materialism influence its advocacy with a mixed-method approach. First, a correlational study (Study 1) suggests that increases in media consumption and stress and anxiety during the pandemic predicted current levels of materialism, however these effects were limited. Second, contrary to our expectations, a longitudinal study (Study 2) shows that people's focus on money decreased during the pandemic. Last, a social media content analysis (Study 3) reveals a downward trend in users' online discourses about consumption-related behaviours, but an upward trend in brands promoting spending as a way to attain well-being. The observed changes could fuel deeper societal changes in the labour market and in consumer behaviours, and have further implications for individual and societal well-being in a post-pandemic world.

Keywords: *Materialism; COVID-19; Contextual Effects*

Track: Consumer Behaviour