

Combining Q methodology and survey research to investigate consumers' varying responses to the pandemic

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Abstract

Lockdowns and protective measures during the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted consumers' routines. Consumers responded to these changes in different ways. We combined Q methodology and survey research to investigate factors that determine consumers' varying responses in the context of food purchase and consumption behaviour. We identified six viewpoints in the Q study, namely Careful Optimism, Struggling Realism, Indulging Traditionalism, Concerned Idealism, Anxious Pessimism and Impatient Altruism, which differ in their beliefs and opinions concerning food-related behaviour changes. In an online survey, conducted with 1000 consumers in Germany, we investigated the distribution of the previously identified viewpoints in the general population. We also employed several sociodemographic and psychographic factors to better characterize them. The results show, amongst others, that respondents belonging to the more worried viewpoints have a lower internal locus of control and are less satisfied with their lives, while this is the opposite for the more optimistic viewpoints.

Subject Areas: *Attitude, Consumer Behaviour, Market Analysis and Response, Public Policy*

Track: Consumer Behaviour