

# The Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Digital Lifestyle in China

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## **Abstract**

Using daily individual-level mobile app usage data (N = 80,533), and city-level mobility data and credit card data, we document the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and lockdown on people's daily digital lifestyle patterns in a major city in China. We leverage 3 deescalating levels of lockdowns/restrictions in regression discontinuity in time analysis to quantify the impact of the pandemic on mobile app usage, and also test for age and gender inequalities. We identify the drivers of the behavioral changes and show that change in app usage is mediated by the degree to which the app category corresponded with physical-world interactions (mobility and offline credit card transactions) before the pandemic. Our results show that Internet-enabled lifestyles, far from being immune to the pandemic, are often embedded within physical environments and interactions, and only recover after the physical environment normalizes.

**Subject Areas:** *Channels, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing, Information Systems*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media