

Crises and their impact on consumers' shopping styles

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Abstract

The Corona pandemic and the devastating war in Ukraine have not only brought immeasurable suffering to millions of people, but also had a considerable impact on the economic situation in many countries due to lockdowns, supply chain shortages, inflation and extreme energy costs. Brick-and-mortar-stores are having to accept significant declines in sales whereas online shopping has become much more important than before the pandemic. Many fear that inner cities are becoming increasingly deserted. The question arises as to whether consumers will turn their backs on the city centers or whether, after these crises, they will once again increasingly go shopping there. We explore the question of how these crises have affected consumers' shopping styles. For this purpose, we have conducted 5 surveys from May 2020 to spring and autumn 2021, to spring 2022 and to September/October 2022 (in total 5,572 valid questionnaires). They show that utilitarian shopping prevails in severe crisis situations whereas hedonic shopping only occurs when consumers think they have the crisis under control. The results also show that critical events lead to a "change mindset " and an openness to new, unfamiliar offers.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Hedonic Products, Public Policy*

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