

# **Perceived Threat of COVID-19 Influences Product Preferences: The Moderating Role of Consumers' Mindset**

## **ABSTRACT**

Recent research has suggested conflicting evidence on how consumers respond to threat (from diseases) concerning their product preferences. Specifically, consumers might exhibit higher versus lower preferences for typical (vs. atypical) products. Drawing upon the literature on consumption-based affect regulation and consumers' mindset, this research seeks to reconcile these seemingly conflicting findings by establishing the moderating role of consumers' mindset. In three experimental studies, we show that among consumers with a fixed (vs. growth) mindset, perceived threat of COVID-19 would lead to higher (vs. lower) preferences for typical products. Furthermore, these divergent effects are explained by two distinct affect regulation strategies. The effect of threat among consumers with a growth (vs. fixed) mindset will be mediated by regaining a sense of control (vs. self-protection). These findings contribute the literature on disease cues, affect regulation, and consumers' mindset, and offer practical implications for marketers during COVID-19 pandemic.