Post-COVID-19 Consumers’ Cautious and Virtuous Mindsets: New Marketing Opportunities for Positive Social Change

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Abstract
Amidst the 2019/22 COVID-19 miseries, a silver lining appears: the pandemic is causing many of us rethink our lives. Using terror management theory (TMT), this conceptual essay identifies the simultaneous emergence of two mindsets, a cautious mindset, stemming from the preservation motive, and a “virtuous” mindset, stemming from an enrichment motive—an intentionality to live a more fulfilling life. These two mindsets in turn produce five life perspectives—life themes for everyday living and achieving long-term life goals. This study reviews evidence of these five life perspectives in published reports of consumers’ thoughts during the pandemic. In turn, these emergent life perspectives and consumer motives present new opportunities for marketers to advance consumer well-being and positive social change as developed in this paper. Weaving a nexus of consumers’ emergent life perspectives, consumption motives, and marketer opportunities, our conceptual framework suggests seven research questions for marketing scholars.

Keywords
COVID-19, community building, consumer well-being, altruism, terror management theory

Introduction
Now into its fourth year globally, most of us have experienced COVID-19 first-hand, either in catching the infection ourselves or in knowing someone who suffered. Many have been rendered unemployed or experienced reduced hours of employment. A large proportion of us experienced having to switch to working remotely, devoid of beyond-the-home face-to-face interactions with other humans. Almost everyone in the developed and developing nations alike has experienced lockdowns in one form or another. Everyday life has been severely restricted and restructured for most people in the world. COVID-19’s 2022 resurgence in the form of its Omicron BA.5 variants increases awareness of life’s fragility and the need to rethink the role of work, leisure, and consumption in our lives at large. Segments of the world’s population are rethinking, as well, how, when, and why they need to interface with businesses and marketplaces (WHO Report 2020; Zhang et al. 2020).

The objectives of this conceptual essay are to identify and profile changes in consumers’ mindsets and worldviews during COVID-19 and in the lockdown periods. Based on conceptual reflections and published empirical reports, the present essay identifies five emergent life perspectives and consumer motivations. To respond to these trends in consumer motivations, the study here develops five business and marketing innovations in strategy and offerings. This essay is in the tradition of a few other significant essays published in business literature, both academic (e.g., He and Harris 2020; Kotler 2020; Sheth 2020) and journalistic (Anderson, Rainie and Vogels 2021; McKinsey and Company 2021a); these prior essays highlight the dynamics in consumers’ contexts, shopping, consumption habits, and the need for businesses to pivot to the new market and economic reality.

The present essay extends these perspectives by focusing on the more macro and worldview-level changes in people’s intentionality regarding their future lives and, correspondingly, the more macro and big-impact innovation opportunities for businesses. Within the macromarketing literature, the essay contributes to a small but significant body of COVID-19-related research published in this journal (e.g., Kotler, Roberto and Leisner 2006; Shabbir, Hyman and Kostyk 2021), advancing responsive marketing innovations by strategy-driving actors in marketing systems.

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Organization of the Paper

This essay’s organizing framework comprises four successive stages. The first stage acknowledges selected current theories that could likely predict the kinds of experiences and responses humans would exhibit in the face of catastrophes, and then to develop a fuller account of these responses (i.e., mindsets), we utilize the terror management theory (TMT), leading to the postulation of two broad mindsets emergent from the COVID-19 experience. These broad mindsets give rise to five life perspectives—defining the intentional direction for one’s life, going forward, and making up the second stage. Then, in the third stage, five motivations are deduced, pertaining to what consumers will seek in their interactions and exchanges with the marketplace. In the last and fourth stage, five areas of opportunities for innovation and response by marketers are proposed. In suggesting these marketing responses to consumers’ emergent motives for wellbeing, this last section echoes the once-novel but now well-accepted concept of social marketing (Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Zaltman, Kotler and Kaufman 1972). Finally, the paper ends with a nexus of seven Research Questions for future scholars.

Theories That Explain the Human Experience of Catastrophes

A number of theories could potentially predict and explain how humans will experience a catastrophe such as COVID-19. First, COVID-19, with its inherent potential to inflict a serious health blow, will cause humans to perceive a threat, and that will in turn lead them to seek protection against it. Protection motivation theory will predict such a human response. This theory proposes that people faced with a threat appraise the threat, consider available responses and their potency in fighting the threat, and their own self-efficacy to implement a response (Rogers 1975). The threat appraisal triggered by the protection motivation is bound to raise consciousness of the vulnerability to insecurity, which in the case of COVID-19 will pertain to health as well as financial domains. Another theory is that of coping strategy (Duhachek 2005). The coping strategy theory suggests that humans choose various strategies to overcome the stress or anxiety such as (a) preventive action, (b) seeking social support, and (c) positive thinking (Duhachek 2005). The lockdowns certainly brought most of the family members together, thus bolstering social support (Hudson 2020). And positive thinking entails being optimistic that the pandemic will pass. In one study, mind positivity as a general trait led to reduced COVID anxiety (Mittal 2022).

Yet another theory is that of sense making or meaning making (Passmore, Gouvea and Giere 2014). In sense making, one tries to understand why an adversity is occurring and why it is occurring to them. The related concept of meaning making concerns one’s quest for the purpose of our living and a catastrophe brings that purpose in focus anew, causing people to rethink their life’s goals and purposes. Indeed, this concept has been applied to people’s cognitive processing of COVID-19 experiences (Todorova et al. 2021; De Jong, Ziegler and Schippers 2020).

These theories best explain the diverse human responses of specific kinds; thus, each of the five emergent mindsets (see below) will be best explained individually by one of the available pool of theories mentioned above. In contrast, there is one theory, terror management theory (TMT), that has the advantage of being able to inform and explain the emergent mindsets of both kinds, namely, perception of threat and resultant protection motivation on the side of the negative emotion, and, on the side of positive emotion, people’s adoption of a new intentionality to reorient one’s life, post-COVID. The next section discusses this theory and our COVID-19 experience.

Terror Management Theory and Public’s Mindsets during COVID-19

Psychologists (e.g., Greenberg, Pyszczynski and Solomon 1986; Pyszczynski et al. 2021) have proposed terror management theory (TMT) to explain humans’ responses to the ever-present threat of death. This paper’s COVID-19 application of TMT progresses with the following postulates. Humans are aware of the inevitability of death and therefore they harbor the ever-present existential terror. They also have an instinct for self-preservation. Driven by this instinct, humans counter potential terror by an anxiety-buffering system, comprising three mental schemas: cultural worldviews, self-esteem, and close interpersonal relationships. Cultural worldviews are shared beliefs about what is good behavior in society, and that if we live up to those standards, we will have achieved symbolic immortality—leaving our good acts behind so as to exist perennially. Fear of mortality makes segments of humans want to do good things so as to leave good acts behind for people to remember them by.

Nurturing self-esteem is the second buffer. Doing good things also kindles self-esteem. Self-esteem comes from seeing ourselves living successfully according to the standards set by one’s reference group’s culture. Self-esteem mitigates the sadness of mortality consciousness—’I know I will someday die but while alive, I am living a life of doing good that I can be proud of.’

Close interpersonal relations—the third buffer subsystem—provide proof that others like us because we are living according to their standards. When we act to comply with these standards, in our minds we make ourselves likeable. Put together, these three schemas allow humans to think they are living a worthy life and therefore deserve being allowed to live. Accordingly, they think that death will not come to them before it must, so to speak; and when it does come, they will have left behind enough “good” in the world (see Trzebiński, Cabański and Czamecka 2020).

With the current division of opinion and action in our society related to various public health prescriptions for containing the pandemic, some of that division violent and abusive, it is worth pointing out that this tri-partite system works for both sides of
the divide. This is because the members of each side find their “standards” (good behaviors) from their own “tribal” communities. Each side is living, in their own worldview, a “virtuous” life. Each side thus manages to thwart the threat of mortality.

Mortality threat is not a visible, “always on” emotion in humans. The existential terror lives in the mind like background noise, and so does its remedy: the self-satisfying thought that one is living a life that is deserving of living. One sees oneself as living a meaningful and purposeful life and, in normal times, this purpose is also defined in largely personal, self-serving terms: e.g., doing one’s job well and rearing good children to leave behind. But when death becomes more vivid in its proximal presence, then existential terror comes to the fore. There are two simultaneous responses: preservation and enrichment. Preservation responses create a mindset of caution. Enrichment responses create a mindset of virtue. Thus, TMT predicts the emergence of two mindsets in people: (a) a “cautious mindset,” wanting to ensure personal safety, and (b) a “virtuous mindset,” wanting to do good things for society (Pyszczynski et al. 2021). Figure 1 depicts this dynamics. Partouche-Sebbar et al. (2021) identify consumer embrace of an ‘avoidance coping strategy’, which aligns with the preservation motive; they also found spirituality to act as a moderator, a consumer trait that will likely engender the enrichment motive.

With the cautious mindset, the immediate task for a person facing the terror is to preserve one’s body and one’s living (e.g., flight away from a predator). In the context of COVID-19, this preservation takes the form of securing health and financial security. Also, deploying the third buffer subsystem—close interpersonal relations, one seeks greater ties with one’s fellow communities. In the context of COVID-19, when preservation response itself has become partisan and divisive, the need to bond translates into stronger in-group ties. Thus, the cautious mindset of Preservation produces these two life perspectives: (i) health and financial security consciousness, and (ii) deeper in-group bonding. The virtuous mindset in the Enrichment response produces the intent to live a more meaningful life. In the context of COVID-19, this “virtuous mind” manifests itself into three life perspectives: (i) awakened altruism, (ii) community and climate salience, and (iii) work-life balance and investment in self. Figure 2 is a visual of these processes.

We projected these five mindsets from a reading of people’s responses to the pandemic and lockdowns, reported verbatim in a recent book on the subject (Mittal 2021). The largest proportion (25 out of 100) of these responses were reactions to the general pandemic environment and government action (including political diatribe and out-group disparaging). A few (11 out of 100) proclaimed no change in their perspective, going forward. Among the remaining—a verbatim could cover multiple categories, the answers ranged from becoming more health conscious (16), being financially worried and intending to save more money (14), spending more time with family (9), living more in the moment (9), valuing social life more than money (7), being nicer to and helping people (6), rethinking life or not returning to or rearranging work (5), being grateful (3), living life to the full (2), and having no clue (2). From these responses, we formed the five categories of the emergent mindset. We further develop and examine the support for these categories below.

Five Life Perspectives Emerging During COVID-19

From a pilot test we were able to verify the presence of these five perspectives of the emergent mindset with a slice of empirical survey data available to us from a national survey of Americans. This survey and its findings to support the verification are described in Appendix 1. We had expected the preservation mindset, but the appearance of the virtuous mindset was a surprise discovery. Inspired by this verification of a virtuous mind, below, we describe the five emergent perspectives, drawing additional support, where possible, from available published sources.

Health and Financial Security Consciousness

Contracting the disease is unfortunate and distressing, of course. But just the apprehension of being infected produces deep anxiety in some people—this is the TMT’s basic premise. A U.N. survey reports a substantial segment of the population was in distress—45% in the USA, 35% in China, and 60% in Iran (United Nations 2020). In a USA Today (February 24, 2021) article, Alana, a 21-year-old student in London, reported being so worried that at the slightest ache in her arm and chest, she texted her friends, “I think I am going to die!” Jane, a 70-year-old Arizona woman stated, “It overtakes our life. It’s really debilitating. … sometimes I really think I’m going insane.” Amy, a 32-year-old from Hertfordshire, England, says her health anxiety is “relentless and exhausting” (Moniuszko 2021).

A pandemic awakens people into valuing their health more and it instills a resolve to take new measures toward a healthier lifestyle (Weaver et al. 2021). In parallel, a feeling of financial insecurity arises. A national survey in April-May 2020 by Social Policy Institute at Washington University found that 24% of people had lost their jobs or had their incomes reduced, the highest level since the Great Depression (Despard et al. 2020). A University of Southern California survey revealed that from April 2020 to March 2021, 48% of Americans experienced financial insecurity. Financial insecurity leads, of course, to insecurity in other domains: 36% experienced psychological distress 29% food insecurity, 33% stress due to isolation (Thomas et al. 2021). In the Qualtrics national survey as well, consumers exhibited a heightened concern with health and also with the need to work toward greater financial security (Figure A and Table A). In the TMT model, this is a preservation response. Consumer behaviors of hoarding (Kirk and Rifkin 2020) and panic buying (Lindenmeier, Hodges and Saliterer 2021) observed at the onset of COVID-19, are
essentially a preservation response driven by the cautious mindset.

Panic buying in the wake of COVID-19 has been investigated in a large number of studies in consumer behavior. Its occurrence has been verified in diverse countries, including Australia, China, India, North Korea, Singapore, USA, and UK, among others (e.g., Arafat et al. 2020; Bandyopadhyaya and Bandyopadhyaya 2021). It has been explained by various theories such as PMT or protection motivation theory (Kim et al. 2022), health belief model (Chua et al. 2021), resource scarcity, contagion theory and crowd psychology (Prentice, Quach and Thaichon 2022), among others. It can also be explained as the preservation motive triggered by perceived threat to one’s future food security; as Figure 1 shows, the activation of preservation motive is the first and inevitable response to catastrophes such as COVID-19 according to TMT. In this paper’s formulation, the use of TMT enables taking cognizance of a wider range of consumer actions (including panic buying) within the broader umbrella of “health and financial security consciousness.”

**Deeper in-Group Bonding**

In personal adversities, humans seek support from their social groups. In group adversities, humans cooperate with group members. If a house catches fire, all neighbors volunteer to help. If the catastrophe strikes an entire population, such as a hurricane, everyone in a city or country joins hands (Mishra and Rath 2020). Developing interpersonal relationships is an emergent “cautious mind” response in...
TMT. Positioning oneself as part of a larger community situates oneself to receive material help from other members of the group or community; it also offers self-validation that one is embracing the cultural values of the group (Seppala 2012). However, when the remedies to fight the catastrophe themselves become controversial, populations will group on the opposite sides, and they will then bond with their respective in-groups. COVID-19 and its preventive remedies have become just such a divisive issue (Rothwell and Rothwel 2020). The CDC-proposed preventive measures are seen by some as unnecessary or unwanted, so their own survival response is rejection of those remedies, and they derive the validation of their righteousness in doing so with greater identification with their in-groups (Mordecai and Connaughton 2020). We witness this in-group solidarity in media reports of public displays of group rebukes of the practices of the other groups (e.g., Kelleher, Tang and Rodriguez 2021; Mittal 2021). Thus, during the pandemic and the lockdowns, the preservation motive resulted in a solidification of in-group bonding among people of diverse political loyalties.

While the other four emergent mindsets are described in a recent paper designed to develop the warranted responses from urban planners and city managers (Mittal and Woodside 2022), this emergent mindset (deeper in-group bonding) is proposed uniquely in the present paper. As will be discussed below, this emergent mindset has a unique implication for the field of macromarketing and marketing strategists.

**Awakened Altruism**

Altruism is “unselshness, devotion to the welfare of others, opposite of egoism” (Online Etymology Dictionary, Svanberg and Carl 2022). A pandemic exposes people to large-scale suffering. Altruistic people are, by definition, characteristically more other-focused, as opposed to being self-focused. As such they empathize more when they see the suffering of others due to a pandemic. Zaki (2020) refers to this as the rise of “catastrophic compassion.” A number of surveys report a marked rise in altruism (see Chan 2017; Dasgupta et al. 2020). In the Qualtrics national survey also, many respondents exhibited such altruistic thinking (Figure A and Table A illustrate).

Altruism made salient served to energize people’s willingness to contribute to charitable causes and to engage in more unselshish acts. Jin and and Ehri (2021) report that experimental subjects for whom mortality threat was made more salient in the context of COVID-19 engaged in more altruistic acts than did the control group. And according to a Gates Foundation report, 56 percent of US households gave to a charity or volunteered in response to the pandemic, with a 12.6% increase in new donors (Vox 2021). And Charity Navigator (a tracker) reported that donations to Feeding America increased 1,980 percent year over year, and donations to “Doctors without Borders” increased 131 percent year over year (Vox 2021). According to a UN report, prosocial behavior and volunteering surged during COVID-19 globally: In France, Tous Bénévoles (All Volunteers) registered 40,000 new volunteers; in Italy, 60,000 new volunteers signed up for Red Cross; in the...
Netherlands, 48,000 new volunteers signed up (UN Report, undated). Research has also found that acts of altruism bring their performers personal gratification and thus sustain altruistic behaviors (Floridi and Edward 1998; Svoboda 2013).

Community and Climate Salience

Public calamities usually bring people together, raising their awareness of interdependence. An infectious disease is viewable as being propagated by people and among people, unintentionally, inadvertently, helplessly (see Saladino, Algeri and Auriemma 2020). Therefore, this is bound to raise the awareness of interdependence. Independent versus interdependent self-concept is an established trait in the psychology literature (see Markus and Kitayama 1991). Athena Aktipis, a psychologist at Arizona State University, in her worldwide survey found that people increasingly agreed with statements such as, “My neighborhood and I rise and fall together” and “All of humanity and I rise and fall together” (Aktipis 2020). This interdependence became harnessed, and in turn made salient, in a segment of the public when public health agencies cajoled citizens to wear a mask for the sake of protecting others, even if they thought they themselves were not vulnerable (see Eisenhauer 2020).

The interdependence between climate and the pandemic is another facet of this issue. The pandemic continues raising our awareness of the climate changes for two reasons. One, the pandemic spread faster and infections rates were higher in cities and towns where pollution was high. Second, the forced lockdown reduced vehicle traffic on the road and consequently, the air everywhere was lighter and cleaner, and consumers noticed that. This was especially more vividly visible in cities like New Delhi (India), Aguascalientes (Mexico), Kampala (Uganda), Dushanbe (Tajikistan), and Dammam (Saudi Arabia), among others (Vanzo 2021). These observations made many consumers realize the connection between climate and the heightened risk of the spread of viruses in the future. The link between climate and the pandemic has been articulated well in prior literature (e.g., Kunreuther and Slovic 2020; Mittal and Woodside 2022; Wyns 2020).

Work-Life Balance and Investment in Self

The COVID-19 pandemic also led people to take a second look at the importance of work-life balance. This revisit is due to several factors: First, realizing that one could become infected and die anytime, people realize that spending so much of one’s life at work is just not worth it. Reexamining one’s life and resetting one’s life goals when faced with a catastrophe is also an essential response predicted by TMT (Greenberg, Pyszczynski and Solomon 1986). Second, with life’s newly realized ephemerality, individuals realize they need to spend more time on personal projects and with family and friends. Realizing that life is short, some people also felt that they needed to invest more in themselves and enjoy themselves more (see Parker, Horowitz and Minkin 2020; Zheng, Ruan and Zheng 2021). Alaina Love, author and consultant quotes a professional lamenting to her, “Does what I do connect to a higher purpose within me? If these were the last moments of my life, is this how I’d want to spend them?” (Love 2021). The most vivid evidence of this change in perspective is the Great Resignation movement currently unfolding in 2022, with an estimated 4.5 million people quitting their jobs every month (Fortune magazine 2022). Many respondents in the Qualtrics survey claim to be experiencing this transformation (see Appendix).

Each of the three virtuous mind trends will be defined and belied by a larger group of people who harbor deeply entrenched opposite values. In fact, Pyszczynski et al. (2021) triangulate TMT with COVID-19 and explain how some segments of the public will exhibit hostile attitudes toward pandemic-safety-compliant citizens, a phenomenon we witnessed worldwide in the wake of the simultaneously rising political polarization. We have no delusions that virtuous values have occurred among a large segment of the population; the proposal is only that such a transformation has occurred in a sliver of the population, as verbatim reports in the Qualtrics survey make clear. In fact, a large swath of the population will continue to exhibit the opposite mindsets: one of selfishness, decrying of the public health recommendations, denial of climate science, and even higher desire to stay away from strangers and other people (Jaspal and Nerlich 2022; Mayer, Elcher and Kubota 2022). In some instances, this camp, holding the opposite value, will be a mere niche segment; in some cities and towns, it will be even a majority segment. Yet, a segment is growing, considerable in size, whose attitudes are turning more compassionate toward community and climate. These emergent mindsets have implications both for government and public management sectors and for businesses and marketers. Issues and implications for government and public management sectors are developed in Mittal and Woodside (2022); the present study focuses on the issues and opportunities for businesses and marketing strategists.

Trends in People’s Motivation with Marketer Opportunities

The aforementioned five life perspectives, facets of new worldviews, in turn produce new motivations in the specific domains of people’s role as consumers. Here, these motivations are organized also into five categories as Figure 3 illustrates. Although a broader range of motivations are possible to project, e.g., shifting to online channel permanently, voluntary simplicity, more fitness activities, increased consumption of entertainment media, cocooning, increased levels of self-care (Cinar 2020; Kotler 2020; Sheth 2020; Sorrentino, Leone and Caporuscio 2022), the present essay focuses on the five that engender most directly and most logically from the five perspectives (as the following description will show) and some of which are also the ones not identified in prior literature. As this paper describes these perspectives, Figure 4 and the following
discussion will outline marketers’ opportunities to respond to these consumer behavior trends.

**Consumption Centered on Health and Well-Being**

With the rise of health consciousness, consumers seek healthier food options. Demand for fresh, local, and organic is rising in 2021–22 (OPN Connect Newsletter 2022). Additionally, consumers can also be expected to seek membership in fitness, sports, and recreation clubs. Also, demand for well-being and mental health products is expected to grow. A recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found the rates of anxiety and depression among Americans to be as high as 35%. Likewise, the Centre for Mental Health in the UK predicted in October 2020 that up to 10 million people (almost 20% of the UK population) will need either new or additional mental health support as a direct consequence of COVID-19 (O’Shea 2020).

Mental health comes in two forms: amelioration and flourishing. Amelioration (more commonly known as “treatment”) requires counseling and medical intervention, e.g., antidepressants and sleep aids. Such practices as meditation, mindfulness, immersion in soothing visual and aural environments, and motivational talks address flourishing. There will be an increased demand for yoga and meditation centers and other wellness service providers. According to Allied Market Research, the yoga industry will reach $66 billion of revenue by 2027, up from $37 billion in 2019. The mini-industry for app-based flourishing products has already been on the boom (e.g., Headspace and Calm).

**Marketers’ Opportunity.** Marketing opportunities for the health, fitness, and wellness industry are evident in the above description of this trend. Fitness clubs like Planet Fitness and Orangetheory Fitness would do well to bring their facilities to more neighborhoods. New Age yoga and meditation, and also spa salons, can expect to do well. More consumers will also seek electronic devices for fitness and health monitoring (such as the Oura Smart Ring, WHOOP). Mental health treatment as well as counseling services are likely to experience increasing demand. And lastly, additional “flourishing” services (e.g., “motivational talks”), both app-based (e.g., Calm) and physical space-based, will be in high demand.

**Frugality and Indulgence**

With new consciousness of financial insecurity and continuing financial duress among some even as the economy reopens, a significant percentage of consumers will exercise frugality in their purchases. Kotler (2020) proposes, “I predict that this period of deprivation and anxiety will usher new consumer attitudes and behaviors that will change the nature of today’s capitalism. Finally, substantial segments of citizens are

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**Figure 3.** Consumer motivations engendered by the new life perspectives.
reexamining what they consume, how much they consume, and how all this is influenced by class issues and inequality.” Consumers will implement this frugality both by buying less and buying with greater attention to price, as the Qualtrics survey also found. This segment of consumers will likely seek value-priced products and trusted makers, sacrificing mere brand prestige over functional quality.

At the opposite end of the continuum, many consumers are now giving free rein to their pent-up desires for soaking up the marketplace and filling up their shopping carts again. Consumer scholars had always expected this (e.g., Sheth 2020), and the latest industry reports confirm it: “More than half of US consumers expect to spend extra to treat themselves” (McKinsey and Company 2021b; Pymnts.com 2021). Whereas among those who took to buying online and achieved felicity doing that, the acquisition of products continued nearly unabated; this segment of consumers would still be eager to flock to the physical stores just to reconnect with their favorite stores in person again. And those who never took a fancy to online stores will no doubt eagerly resume their pre-COVID buying routine, with increased buying velocity for a while. For some consumers, frugality is one outcome of more mindful consumption triggered by the pandemic type of catastrophe, as predicted by TMT. Counter-intuitively, the opposite effect of more materialism and indulgence among a different segment of consumers is also an outcome congruent with and predicted by TMT: Materialism is a signal of personal success that bolsters self-esteem.

Beyond the acquisition of products, consumers will flock to service establishments and recreational venues (restaurants, pubs, sports, arts, and music venues); likewise, there will be a spike in travel, with a rise in demand for hotels, airlines,
cruises, and destination travel. We see this upsurge in foot traffic already in places that are opening up, even with safety restrictions (see Lahart 2021). This trend will be in full bloom over the next few years, before things settle down to pre-COVID levels.

**Marketers’ Opportunities.** Catering to frugality-minded consumers will require marketers to bring out more value-priced versions of their products. Stores that typically focus on value can expect to do well, stores such as TJ Maxx, Big Lots, Costco, and Overstock. Marketers will need to find new avenues of catering to this frugality segment. This is where the literature on Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) and value creation for this segment can guide businesses to reorient their value system and business model (Grimm 2020; Kolk, Rivera-Santos and Rufin 2014; Purohit, Paul and Mishra 2021). While the concept of BoP applies to the bottom-layer impoverished people in the underdeveloped countries, similar value creation and business model mindset and strategies will need to be deployed by business firms even in the more advanced economies as the inequality, poverty, and resource-depletion expands and afflicts the lowest income groups in nations big and small.

Payaud (2014) identifies five strategies for the BoP markets in third world countries: (1) single-serve packaging and low-cost products for affordability; (2) improvised distribution methods to improve accessibility to consumers in remote towns with poor logistics infrastructure; (3) product adaptation for local health, housing, and water and electricity supply conditions; (4) consumer education—to overcome BoP consumers’ deficit of awareness of product benefits and use skills; and (5) fair and inclusive growth—supporting local economic development, for example, by involving BoP consumers in production and distribution. Similar strategies will need to be innovated to serve the consumers with pandemic-induced economic hardships even in the developed economies like the USA and Western Europe. These marketing strategies could include: (1) Creating and offering barebones products and simpler packaging; (2) bulk vending with customer self-service—for better price value; (3) new distribution centers for slightly imperfect products and marked-down sales; (4) expansion of DIY domains; and (5) trickle-down of the “maker economy” to a wider consumer/producer base.

1) **Barebones products and simple packaging.** A recent *U.S. News (Money section)* report singled out Costco store brand *Kirkland Signatures* and Target store brand of generic medicines, *Up and Up* as examples of low-cost products that outperformed their expensive name-brand equivalents. Businesses could “innovate” such low-cost equivalents in a much broader range of product categories and then increase access with more intensive distribution programs. An additional option in these new “value price stores” will entail having an aisle or section dedicated entirely to name-brand products in no-frill, simple packaging.

2) **Bulk vending with customer self-service.** Many stores offer bulk vending of products. However, currently, this facility is available only in selected cities, with sparse distribution and only for limited product categories. Moreover, they have acquired the halo of glorious shopping by the so-called “health nuts” in stores such as Whole Foods Market, USA, and Rainbow Grocery Cooperative in San Francisco’s Mission District. This marketing innovation needs to be repurposed for a wider product assortment, at value-price points, and then made accessible in every non-affluent neighborhood.

3) **New distribution centers for slightly imperfect products.** Currently, Overstock (mainly an online store) sells excess inventory of furniture and other hard goods and has only a few physical locations in the USA. Other discount stores such as Marshall’s, TJ Maxx, and Big Lots also sell slightly irregular versions of name-brand clothing and household items. And yet, the access to discounted products remains limited for low-income neighborhoods. One category of discounted products is heavily marked-down merchandise in regular (non-discount) stores. Macy’s, a large department store in the USA, for example, features a “Last Call” rack for deeply discounted clothing; many other stores such as J. Crew, Banana Republic and Old Navy, offer season-ending merchandise at steep mark-downs. However, such marked-down merchandise is currently offered, naturally, only at these companies’ regular stores and, in some cases, at their far-away outlet stores. While these stores would likely wish to retain some of this marked down merchandise for their regular stores so as to build traffic, they could divert a part of it to a third party, aggregator store, which may be located in every low- and middle-income neighborhood’s shopping centers.

4) **Expansion of DIY domains.** During the pandemic, DIY stores witnessed their sales rise substantially (Schmidt 2021). Post-COVID, the DIY sector could be expanded on two fronts: (1) teaching and facilitating DIY skills among consumers who have hitherto shied away from this prosumer (producer-consumer) role; and (2) expanding the DIY activities, so far limited to home improvement projects, to other domains such as minor car repairs, cooking, sewing, and kitchen gardens. Even as this will help consumers reduce their costs of needed repairs, it will also present opportunities for businesses to offer workshops and supplies as an extension of their business.

5) **Maker economy’s trickle down.** Maker economy is an adaptation of the “maker movement” concept, which refers to a “platform for artisans to create, craft, and develop leading ideas and products” (Rainwater 2016). This has taken the form of self-styled, home-based micro-manufacturer entrepreneurs producing and selling their creations at local farmers’ and craft
markets and on online platforms like Etsy (see, Preuss 2022). The trickle-down project, steered by businesses and resourced with micro-loans from local banks, could expand this movement from the current array of artisan products to everyday utilitarian, low-cost products, both for self-consumption (akin to home brewing of craft beer, a recent rising trend) and for selling to fellow locals.

At the other end, to respond to customers who are eager to revive their shopping sprees, retailers will have opportunities for offering novel merchandising and in-store experiences such as fashion shows, product demos in groups, wine tastings, and social hours. Opportunities for innovations in value creation in prestige-branded products and experiential services will also be available for savvy businesses to participate in (Wang et al. 2022).

**Buying with Social Conscience**

With a rise in altruism, community consciousness, and greater salience of the interdependent self-concept, consumers will seek to channel their newfound consciences into their consumption activities. Consumers recognizing that their consumption contributes to climate deterioration will seek to minimize this adverse effect on the climate, by buying more of climate-friendly products. This shift means a larger portion of consumers’ food spend is going to organic and plant-based foods. This trend is on the rise since 2021 and is accelerating during the pandemic’s life—organic produce sales grew by 14% during 2020, adding $1.0 to $8.5 billion in annual sales (Devenyns 2021). And those consumers who recognize that buying local helps reduce transportation-caused burdens on the environment will seek to buy local. A global survey of consumers worldwide by *Retailwire* found that 56% of global consumers are buying more locally sourced products since the pandemic and 84% plan to continue to do so long-term. Also, in a survey of 1,500 Americans by the research group Elements54 in August 2020, nearly 27% of respondents said they are now, since the pandemic’s start, more likely to shop retailers and brands that support social and environmental causes. This share compares with 16% of respondents before the pandemic, a 68% increase (Pearson 2020).

**Marketers’ Opportunity**. Marketers now need to offer more climate-friendly products, across a broad spectrum of product categories. This transformation requires a multi-prong action: (a) switching to renewable sources of energy needed to run the factories; (b) replenishing natural resources (e.g., planting trees) or sourcing ingredients without undue depletion of the environmental resources; (c) redesigning products and packaging with less waste; and (d) redesigning products with less drain on the environment during use. For example, P&G is modifying detergent formulas for low-temperature or cold-water wash (PG.com 2021). Companies that adopt a carbon neutrality agenda with gusto and commitment are likely to witness a heightened level of consumer patronage. Retailers that discourage the use of single-use plastic bags or offer special sections of plastic-free product assortments can also expect to see their patronage increase. In February 2018, Dutch supermarket chain EkoPlaza opened in its Amsterdam branch what it called “the world’s plastic-free aisles,” with more than 700 products. Likewise, in September 2018, Unboxed became Toronto’s first zero-waste grocery store. Going forward, there will be more opportunities for similar climate-friendly retailers.

Furthermore, if businesses support product repair and upgrades throughout a product’s lifecycle and if they enable communal consumption and reuse (e.g., peer-to-peer swapping and renting of products), as suggested by Ozanne et al. (2021) to promote ‘wise consumption’, these business practices will likely find resonance among those post-COVID consumers who have cultivated a heightened sense of consuming with a social conscience. A store called *Library of Things*, based in London, UK, encourages people to borrow, rather than buy and own, items one needs infrequently such as tools and small appliances.

Many consumers prefer to buy local, perceiving it to be fresher and therefore healthier (Grebitus, Lusk and Nayga 2013; Naspetti and Bodini 2008). For non-perishables and staples (i.e., FMCG) (e.g., cereals and cleaners), the reduction of transportation-engendered burden on the environment is a reason for consumers seeking local products. However, this connection is not obvious to the majority of consumers. Therefore, marketers need to make explicit the climate advantage of products that are locally sourced. Promoting localness for products with a long shelf-life will require businesses to adopt the “distributed manufacturing” movement (see Campos and Cipolla 2021; Corsini and Moultrie 2021). And supermarkets and the food industry will need to patronize local farmers for fresh produce.

**Hunger for Hobbies, Skills, and Experiences**

During the partial COVID-19 lockdowns, consumers identified new ways for recreation, leisure, and hobbies. Many consumers took to home improvement and other do-it-yourself projects, including gardening, cooking, sewing, and painting. Many used their free time for skill improvement lessons, such as music, and programming. As a result, consumers now have newfound tastes for these skill-based leisure activities (see *USA Today* 2021). Therefore, demand for products that channel these hobbies can be expected to grow, products such as gardening supplies, DIY tools, cooking and gardening guidebooks, and lessons.

Social isolation was one of the most vivid dimensions of negative life experiences during the pandemic. The desire to overcome this deprivation was so strong that some people invented novel ways of connecting with communities. In many Italian cities, for example, people stood on their balconies and sang together. Similar communal singing occurred in Lebanon and Israel. In Spain, in one apartment complex, people joined together for a group fitness class, squatting and doing jumping jacks from their balconies. Manzini and
Menichinelli (2021) argue that post-COVID, people will socialize more in “hybrid spaces,” i.e., they will make new connections with people whom they can meet in physical proximity (e.g., same building dwellers) and then also connect with them on digital platforms.

**Marketers’ Opportunity.** First, businesses offering hobby and skill-centered activities will likely have good potential to grow. Classes in painting, ceramics, baking, other arts and craft, and music lessons will likely be rewarded with good demand. Consumers will also seek such lessons online. According to one report, during 2020, Netflix streaming grew, of course, but 35% of the subscribers used it for educational content (Kohli, Bjorn and Veranen 2021). Second, as the economy reopens, consumer hunger grows for more social interaction. Therefore, merchants and recreational venues that can offer group activities (e.g., yoga classes, painting and ceramics classes, arts and craft workshops, and author talks in bookstores) in localized neighborhoods will likely find good consumer response.

As the economies reopen, marked upturns occur in food, entertainment, travel, and other recreation businesses. Over the 2021 Memorial Day in the USA, *A Quiet Place 2*, released only in brick-and-mortar theaters, broke the pandemic record with $57 million in revenue. Besides this epicurean consumption, of more societal significance is the opportunity for businesses to cater to the demand for lessons in skill development, an experiential consumption activity that is immersive (and therefore recreational) as well as it advances our personal growth.

**Buying With Increased Susceptibility to Social Influence**

The coalescing of populations on the opposite sides of the political divide and the resulting in-group bonding is likely to be sustained. An implicit payoff in the satisfaction of belonging to a community of like-minded people is recognizable. Therefore, this surge of in-group cohesion will likely continue beyond the final disappearance of the pandemic, whenever that may occur (Mishra and Rath 2020). These new in-group associations form and then energize on social media, especially during the partial lockdowns when physical gatherings are in reduced supply.

The reliance on social media for social connecting then extends to seeking information and advice on products and purchases. According to industry reports, a survey of 10,000 consumers across five countries found that daily online content consumption had more than doubled over 9 months since the COVID-19 began. While online content includes streaming media, 48% of the respondents said they were using social media platforms more than before. TikTok saw a high growth among the 18–24 (Accenture 2020). Another industry survey in the USA found that more than half the consumers said that, during the pandemic, they found social media influencers more helpful and more trustworthy than brands themselves (Matter Survey 2020).

**Marketers’ Opportunity.** Post-COVID, marketers will do well to increase their presence on social media. This implies not only that more and more brands should have a brand page on social media, but also that the quality of the content should be richer so it invites consumer engagement. Industry experts recommend a heightened role of social media marketing (Mason, Narcum and Mason 2021). During COVID-19, consumers formed stronger social alliances (albeit more with in-groups); this makes for opportunity for brands to build brand communities both online and off-line.

The recommendation here is not suggesting the nurturing anti-science beliefs of in-group communities, where such beliefs might have been the genesis of these communities; nor do the authors see any merit, commercially speaking, of shunning these groups. Implementing the following strategy is possible for firms: bring the firms’ brands to these parochial communities in cultural events that are agnostic to whatever nexus of anti-science beliefs might have been the basis of their initial bonding. For example, at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which is over-abundantly (and arguably) populated by political conservatives, it is possible for a brand to join and amplify the festivities in a political-belief-agnostic manner. Such a strategy is likely to find acceptance and good reception by consumers of either in-group. Indeed, in industry research, more than half the consumers (55%) said they will not buy a product that was advertised next to fake or inflammatory news (Matter Survey 2020). Thus, marketers should build their brands online though social media without getting entangled in cultural wars.

**Urgent Need to Catalyze: It is now, Not Later**

To assume that the heightened salience of the virtuous mind will be enduring would be naïve. Some consumers will continue to savor them, of course, and preserve and solidify them, with or without any external push. But for many, these will fade away as time passes. If marketers did not offer the means for consumers to implement their “consuming with a conscience” motive, for example, then consumers are unlikely to continue efforts to seek products or services to satisfy those values.

Even though the consumers and citizens with the pandemic-awakened new “virtuous mindset” is likely a niche segment, the ranks of participants in “do good for the community” projects will likely expand due to the “modeling” effect (Bandura 2021), provided that marketers innovate and offer such opportunities to consumers. Moreover, a small segment (say, as small as 10%), when aggregated across the country and across the world, adds up to a large swath of citizens and consumers (e.g., at 10%, 33 million in the USA and 790 million across the world!). Moreover, members of this niche segment would act as innovators, and will likely exert an opinion-leadership influence for the next layers of consumers to adopt these innovative and socially-conscious business offerings. Businesses should of course appraise the economic returns
on investments on these initiatives. Ours is a call to enlightened market leaders to recognize and embrace this small segment of the population that has, in the wake of COVID-19, experienced a “virtuous mind” and wishes to improve lives, theirs and those of others, offer them opportunities to channel their new-found virtuous mind, and do so on a fast-track timeline.

**Directions for Future Research**

The mindset-perspectives-motives (MPM) framework has limits by design in its scope. The framework speaks to certain psychological experiences and behavioral responses people had during the pandemic and the lockdowns. However, the framework makes no claim to covering these experiences comprehensively. Furthermore, the experiences postulated in the framework are in need of more systematic empirical testing and verifications. These limitations suggest a number of goals for future research on this topic as Figure 5 outlines.

First, future research needs to verify the extent to which the populations experienced the cautious and virtuous mindsets, new life perspectives, and emergent consumer motives during the pandemic, and whether these mindsets will endure post-COVID. Both the intensity of these psychological experiences and their population distributions need to be assessed. This is stated in Figure 5 as RQ1 (Research Question1). Taking this one step further, it will help to map the three sets of experienced feelings (mindsets, life perspectives, and consumer motives) onto one another—i.e., assess the intercorrelations among them (RQ2a and RQ2b). At a more granular level, it would be useful to see whether the two opposite consumer segments identified by Schreiner and Baier (2021)—those who prefer marketer offerings entailing benefits to society versus those who respond better to sales promotions of benefits to oneself—are driven more by, respectively, the virtuous versus cautious mindsets.

Next, with empirical data, future research needs to discover other thoughts and feelings not covered here. Personal observations and media stories witnessed over the last three years suggest these additional facets of people’s experiences: many people did not trust the government and health agency guidelines; such distrust of health professionals’ guidelines engendered in many a distrust of science at large and even a denial of the virus; some felt the mandate to comply with health guidelines so unwarranted that they developed a negative attitude toward and active resistance to such measures and some even exhibited a proneness for incivility in life on the street and as customers in service facilities (CNBC 2021; MMA.org 2021); some people felt that the masking and vaccination requirements infringed upon their personal freedom (cf. Lithwick 2020); and not everyone bought into the idea that it is their responsibility to protect others. The extent to which these “personal responsibility beliefs” were engendered needs discovery (RQ3). Relatedly, do people with an interdependent (versus independent) view of the self (Markus and Kitayama 1991) exhibit climate and community salience more and personal freedom infringement belief less? In fact, this set of personal responsibility beliefs should be the manifestations of foundational personal values, and as such they would undergird and be responsible for the experiencing of the cautious and virtuous mindsets and the emergence of life perspectives and consumer motives. Future research should investigate the generative role of such personal responsibility beliefs in the psychological experiences of the pandemic (RQ4).

Next, taking all these four entities as a group (mindsets, life perspectives, consumer motives, and personal responsibility beliefs), future research should explore the role of the people’s context. This context comprises of many elements. First, people with different demographics (e.g., sex, age, education, and income) will likely react differently to the COVID experience; second, these experiences will be felt differently across countries. This is because the infection rates and lockdowns and other preventive measures were different across countries. Also, the government and health agency responses and recommendations differed, with some governments denying or downplaying the pandemic (Hale et al. 2020) while others imposed a 100% compliance regimen. Third, culture would play a significant moderating role in the emergence of specific mindsets. Examining the moderating effects of these contextual factors will increase our understanding of the psychology of the pandemic experience. This forms Research Question 5 (RQ5).

The role of demographics and culture deserves special attention in future research. The experience of COVID-19 and people’s responses to it are likely to differ across nations, cultures, and demographics. For example, in a study of North American young adults (Volk et al. 2021), the demographic factors of income and having children influenced the use of adaptive versus maladaptive responses to COVID-19. In a global survey across 26 countries (N = 53,524), the levels of stress due to COVID-19 differed by age, gender, education level, and household composition; it also differed across the individualism/collectivism divide (Kowal et al. 2020). In a study in China, cultural tightness (versus looseness) resulted into reduced psychological disorders (Dong et al. 2021). In a study in Israel, people’s sense of coherence and hope differed across the three cultural and religious subgroups (Braun-Lewensohn, Abu-Kaf and Kalagy 2021). Similarly, in a study in Georgia (the country), individualism-collectivism influenced the role that the presence or absence of meaning in life played in people’s use of different coping methods (Shekridadze, Javakhishvili and Chkhaidze 2021). In fact, different cultures and religion likely influence how people cope with the death threat itself, and the TMT model might unfold differently across such cultural and religious communities.

The next two research questions pertain to the marketer’s responses to the emerging consumer reaction trends. RQ6 suggests empirical case studies of businesses that adopt specific responses to the opportunities presented by the post-COVID consumer mindset. These responses could include the set of five marketer responses identified in Figure 4. Finally, RQ7 pertains to understanding the impact of the pandemic’s experience on the businesses themselves. Beyond responding to the specific demands placed by the new consumer, did businesses
modify their perspective on their role in society. For example, did they recalibrate their business model—value proposition→value creation and delivery→value capture (e.g., Pedersen et al. 2020) to include societal wellbeing among their purposes? This question evokes the long-standing elaborations of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) research (Bapuji et al. 2020; Sirsly and Lvina 2019). In the context of COVID-19, Carroll (2021) observes, “… it will be interesting to all of us to see where
the dust settles when the pandemic ends and organizations have had a chance to re-imagine or reset their missions, goals, and processes aimed at improving CSR and business-and-society relationships. There is a strong chance that many of the transformations and innovations brought about by the pandemic will become permanent fixtures in organizations and management.” By highlighting the emergence of a “virtuous mind” in a small segment of the population, the present paper suggests a vivid and significant goalpost for CSR-embracing businesses to harness and deploy their CSR resources for positive social change. RQ7 is a call for CSR scholars to observe and analyze such corporate re-imagination. These seven research questions (RQ1 to RQ7), instigated by the reflective mindsets-perspectives-motives (MPM) framework in this essay, contributes both to academic literature and practice.

**Macromarketing, Marketing Systems, and Marketing Action Recommendations to Channel the Virtuous Mind**

COVID-19 is long-term catastrophe with impacts on multiple domains of many lives. It has been an ongoing tragedy, universal in its reach, which has upended “life as usual” in all societal systems—work organizations, schools, religious institutions, medical systems, politics, cultural performances, tourism, and, of course, the marketing system. A marketing system is “a network of individuals, groups and/or entities, embedded in a social matrix, linked directly or indirectly through sequential or shared participation in economic exchange, which jointly and/or collectively creates economic value with and for customers, through the offer of assortments of goods, services, experiences and ideas, that emerge in response to or anticipation of customer demand”.

The present essay clarifies emergent motivations and resultant changes in customer demand, latent or expressed, brought upon by the COVID-19 experience, presents both challenges and opportunities for diverse marketing systems, both for-profit and not-for-profit. This essay profiles and highlights the changing consumer mind that should arouse and spur into action the rest of the marketing system, which evolved or was created to respond to consumer needs and preferences as its raison d'être (cf. Layton 2015, 2018).

This essay also enhances the purposes of macromarketing as a discipline for research and action guidance. Macromarketing refers to the study of (1) marketing systems, (2) the impact and consequence of marketing systems on society, and (3) the impact and consequence of society on marketing systems.” (Hunt 1981, p.8). The present essay speaks to macromarketing at all three levels—it articulates the dynamic influences between and among (a) citizen-consumers, (b) social, political, governmental, economic, cultural, political systems themselves transforming to cope with the pandemic, and (c) the marketplaces reformattting to accommodate the containment regimens.

In an essay on COVID-19-responsive macromarketing, Shabbir, Hyman and Kostyk (2021) focused on the vulnerable segment of society and advocated “care ethics” in protecting and nurturing this segment. Likewise, Kotler, Roberto and Leisner (2006) highlight the poverty-entrenched segments among our populations and emphasize the need to find macro-marketing solutions so as to improve, as they put it, “long-term welfare of individuals, nations, and the global community” (Kotler, Roberto and Leisner 2006, p. 233). The present essay recognizes a similar segment under the rubric of the “cautious, health and financial security conscious” segment; it also highlights yet another segment transformed by the COVID-19 experience, a segment feeling the virtuous mind. As marketers innovate to channel this virtuous mind, the benefits of their responsive offerings will cascade, due to modeling effect (Bandura 2021), to benefit the society at large. As Peterson (2006) observes, macromarketing’s focus should be on societal development (Ekici, Genc and Celik 2021). Consumer well-being should be, and has been, one of the most prominent goals of macromarketing scholarship (see Sirgy, Lee and Rahtz 2007). The present paper offers one path to such societal wellbeing.

**Conclusion**

COVID-19 created fear and social distancing and various 2020–2022 lockdowns turned many humans’ everyday lives upside down. Catastrophes such as the current pandemic bring communities together. COVID-19 seems to have had the opposite effect: Across the world, what we instead see are deep divisions. The politicization of the pandemic and of the public health mandates have produced public discourse of protest, resentment, and anger and rude service customer behavior in considerable segments of the public. In the midst of this noise, it is easy to miss the simultaneous emergence of the opposite sentiment, one of virtue. Using terror management theory (TMT), we identify the emergence of two mindsets, a mindset of caution and a mindset of virtue—of living a more virtuous life. The emergence of this virtuous mindset among a segment of the post-COVID consumers presents opportunities for marketers to bring to their consumers more well-being, and in turn to also help their organization earn more financial rewards.

Pandemics bring, sadly, once-in-a-lifetime misery upon millions of people. But they also bring once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for societies at large to rethink their world, rethink their lives. In his bestseller on the lessons of the pandemic for a post-COVID world, Zakaria (2020) calls this this “the spirit of societal introspection.” The present essay highlights the silver-lining side of the unfortunate event that COVID-19 is. That silver lining—the rise of a virtuous mind in a segment of the population—calls for catalyzing “do good” responses from marketers and businesses. On the flip side, the intensification of a “cautious mindset” and in its wake, the rise of an expanding price-value segment, presents opportunity to businesses to innovate and implement an array of new marketing-mix offerings to pandemic-induced impoverished low- and middle-income neighborhoods. Not to spur to
action with the requisite sense of urgency so as to milk and respond to these opposite trends of cautious and virtuous mindsets will be a missed opportunity. Congruent with the field of macromarketing, the paper (a) recognizes the emergence of both consumers’ self-centered as well as their community-centered mindsets; (b) anchors consumer’s motives for consumption and communal participation in the higher (or macro) level life values as their foundation; and (c) proposes actions for marketers that are both opportunistic for marketers and lifting of individual and societal wellbeing.

This essay calls marketers and businesses to recognize, research, and channel the emergent virtuous mindset and build and shape market offerings and programs that nurture that virtuous mindset, which in turn will present an expanded demand for those offerings. In this sense, the “virtuous mind” segment of society and “virtuous mind” responsive marketers will have consequences on each other, consequences that enhance both immediate satisfaction and long-term wellbeing for both parties.

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**Author Biographies**

Banwari Mittal is a professor of marketing at Northern Kentucky University. He holds an MBA from IIMA and a Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Pittsburgh. He has previously taught at SUNY, Buffalo, the University of Miami, and the University of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia). His research has been published in such journals as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of Economic Psychology, Psychology and Marketing*, and *Marketing Theory*. He has served as Associate Editor for *Journal of Business Research*. He has coauthored seven books: ValueSpace (McGraw-Hill 2001, www.myvaluespace.com), Customer Behavior (with Jagdish Sheth, Dryden Press 1998, and Thomson Learning 2002), and “MyCBBook” (with Jill Avery, Robert Kozinets, Priya Raghubir, and Arch Woodside; www.myCBBook.com 2008 2010 2013 2016 2021), 50 Faces of Happy (2020), TCBC—Teaching Consumer Behavior with Cases (2021), and Consumer Psychology—A Modernistic Explanation (2021). A summary of these books and related ideas and podcasts on marketing,
Appendix 1. Confirmation of the Emergence of “Cautious Mind” and a “Virtuous Mind” in the Population

To understand the emergence of the postulated cautious and virtuous mindsets, we utilize a slice of data from a national random survey of 550 US adults in the Qualtrics sample conducted in May 2020, at the height of COVID-19 and when most of the country had been under lockdowns for at least a month. The respondents in this online random survey (N = 550) comprised 51.5% males. Their age distribution was: 19–30 17.5%; 31–40, 37.6%; 41–55, 32.0%; 56–65 10.7%, and 65 + 2.2%. Education-wise 12.4% had middle or high school education; 22.5% had some college; 41.5% were college graduates; and 23.5% had a master’s degree. In terms of income, <$10K made up 5.3%; $10 to 30K 14.2%; $31 to 50K 16.4%; $51 to 70K 20.9%; $71 to 100K 16.2%; and >$101K 27.1%. Thus, in the sample, adult men and women of all ages, income, and education groups were represented. The survey elicited their agreement or disagreement with a set of statements. Figure A1 presents their responses.

As Figure A1 shows, the survey respondents exhibited remarkable changes in their outlook: 69.7% said their perspective had changed such as 44.1% helped friends and family more, 32.0% helped society more, 67.7% were more considerate, 56.9% planned to be nicer, and about 85% of them felt grateful for everything they got. Put together, these are indicators of altruism and community mindedness. And two other charts show movement toward Work-life balance (Be more mindful, 52% and Appreciate life more, 83.1%). These self-reports likely are inflated due to self-impression bias. The survey also had an open-ended question, asking the respondents to write in their own words how the pandemic had changed their perspective (“How has the pandemic changed your perspective and in the future what will you do differently?”). This question was asked before the closed-ended disagree-agree statements (reported in Figure A1). Table A1 presents a sample of these verbatim answers. Table A1 includes evidence of all five facets of the emergent mindsets: two facets of the cautious mindset and three facets of the virtuous mindset.
Table A1. Consumers’ Emergent Mindsets in the Pandemic Times: A Selection.

| Category                          | Mindset                                                                 | Verbatim Examples                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Health and Financial Security Consciousness | I would stop drinking alcohol, before the end of this year, because it is not really good for the body. (303)  
Eat better and exercise more to enjoy life more and to live more and more and more. (497)  
Be more careful where I spend my money and where I shop (26)  
Make sure to have money saved for emergency. So, I will make more financially smart choices and try to set up an emergency savings fund. (194) |  |
| 2) Ingroup Bonding               | Stop trusting democrats… Democrats should be investigated for the COVID-19 fraud! (74)  
I am afraid i will have less respect for people i used to enjoy, but who now pride themselves to be a**sh**es by refusing to wear a mask.  
Now I stick with people of my kind. (126)                                         |  |
| 3) Awakened Altruism             | Yes, it has made me more compassionate- ate, I’ve donated much more to charity organizations. (273)  
I will try as much as possible to show much gratitude to everyone. (190)  
I will donate to charities more often because now I understand the pain that people suffer. (418) |  |
| 4. Community and Climate Salience| I will try to help anyone anytime I can. (202)  
The pandemic has taught me that you have to care for everyone. (175)  
I now worry more for our community. We are in this together. (209)  
It opened my eyes to nature and how we need to preserve it. (23)  
People are suffering. Businesses are suffering. We have to do what we can to help them. (92) |  |
| 5. Work-Life Balance             | Enjoy myself more with the little things in life. Find a better work balance and more time with family, friends (376).  
This has allowed me to slow down and get things done with more balance on my life between work, home responsibilities, and free time. (362)  
Henceforth, I will give all my family my time and focus on what matters (160)  
I will appreciate life take time to smell the roses don’t be so impatient. (94)  
I’ll lean to value life more than I did in the past. (183) |  |

From a national random survey of US adults (N = 550), May 2020, by authors.  
Verbatim answers in response to the question: “How has the pandemic changed your perspective and in the future what will you do differently?”  
The numbers in parenthesis are denotative only.  
In each of the five categories, significant number of respondents were present (from 10 to 30%).
Figure A1. “Virtuous Mindset” Experienced by Consumers During COVID-19.