

Does the COVID-19 Pandemic Trend Influence the Virality of Trends?

By: Tina Chang

Whipped/dalgona coffee, banana bread, and ab workouts, balancing brooms. Before the world came into a standstill, would we have entertained ourselves with these trends? Would we have painstakingly stirred coffee and sugar, waited for bananas to ripen, and committed ourselves to a vigorous workout routine? Would we have had the time? It seems that with the pandemic, people have been more open to amuse themselves with new trends. After all, while following the proper social distancing guidelines is necessary, it does get monotonous.

The social media platform TikTok has boomed in popularity these past few years. Viral videos are circulated and seen by millions of users. This allows us to be exposed to many more trends. During the pandemic, I have noticed that many of these trends have two recurring themes: time and commitment. I suppose that quarantine has made us more willing to commit our time and effort into pet projects. What better time to start working out, make easy food recipes, or order that new drive-thru drink combination?

Although seemingly contradictory, clothing trends have not been stifled by the pandemic. Even though people have less opportunities to show off their new outfits, online sales have increased. For one, popular online clothing retailers such as Shein have emerged as a popular leader. Consumers are driven by their trendy yet cheap selection of clothing. Many people have been online shopping a lot out of boredom. On TikTok, users would post videos of their haul, showing off the clothes that they have bought. This increases the exposure of the brand and clothing style, propelling it further in popularity. During the pandemic, the trend of an extremely cropped top pair with high waisted bottoms, usually baggy jeans has become a common silhouette for female teenage fashion. Although fashion trends would have caught on just as fast during normal times, the fact that fashion trends have chugged on in a period of time where people have a decreased opportunity to show off their clothes is an impressive feat.

The pandemic has made us more open to accepting trends. However, I would even go further to say that we need these trends--the popularity of these fads remind us that we are not alone in this pandemic. Knowing that other people are also bored enough to try new things is a reassuring thought. Perhaps we don't participate in these trends out of boredom, but to boost our morale.