

The more the better?

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SUMMARY

The three manuscripts described in this dissertation help me and my co-authors to understand how variations in the amount of stimuli in our environment influence consumers' preferences. Furthermore, the findings of our research help us understand why sometimes consumers are not behaving completely rational.

In chapter 2 we consider aesthetically appealing pictures that have the potential to satiate consumers before engaging in an actual experience. Consumers typically search and expose themselves to dozens of—often readily available—experiential visuals, and marketers eagerly try to cater those needs. Contrary to this common intuition, we show that exposure to such an extensive (vs. limited) set of visuals decreases the intention to consume the actual experience. We explain this finding by showing that browsing through an extensive (vs. limited) set of visuals satiates consumers on the experience being shown—thereby decreasing behavioral intentions to further engage in it. Furthermore, consistent with this explanation, we find that this effect only occurs in the context of hedonic (vs. utilitarian) experiential purchases, that it is more pronounced for non-varied (vs. varied) sets of experiential visuals, and that it impacts consumers' choice behavior.

In chapter 3 we investigate how adding an immediate payout to both choice options in an intertemporal choice setting changes financially constrained consumers' decision making. Contrary to a large stream of previous literature, we demonstrate that as long as some immediate payout is guaranteed in an intertemporal choice task (i.e. choice between smaller immediate reward and larger future reward), financially constrained individuals are as likely as non-constrained individuals to accept a delay for a larger payoff and thus make smart and future-proof decisions.

In chapter 4 we explore how the brightness of a restaurants' ambient lighting influences the overall taste intensity perception of the food that is being served there. Our findings show that guests exposed to the bright ambient light perceived the overall taste of the dish as more intense as opposed to guests exposed to the dim ambient light.