

Using Your Sixth Sense for Food Evaluations: Vestibular Sensations Associated with Sitting versus Standing Postures, Physical Stress, and Taste

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Abstract

In some consumption contexts consumers eat while seated; however, in other contexts consumers eat while standing up. Would eating the same food in a sitting (vs. standing) posture influence food taste evaluations? In addressing this research question, we examine the cross-modal effects of vestibular sensations associated with sitting and standing postures on gustatory (i.e., taste) evaluations. The results of five studies show that individuals rate food as better tasting when they sample in a sitting posture than a standing posture. The cross-modal effects of vestibular sensations on taste evaluations seem to be driven by physical stress associated with standing postures leading to decreased sensory sensitivity. Consistent with this, the effects reverse for unpleasant tasting foods and are attenuated when physical stress or physical relaxation are induced through a secondary task.

Keywords: *Posture; Food Taste; Stress*

Track: Consumer Behaviour