

# Evaluation Mode Affects Choice of Healthy and Unhealthy Food

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## **Abstract**

Decisions about avoiding tempting unhealthy food, or choosing healthy less tasty food involve self-control. In series of 5 main studies (N=1181), we investigated the effect of evaluation mode (separate versus joint evaluation) on the choice share of healthy and unhealthy food. We demonstrate that joint evaluation of healthy and unhealthy food option might enhance self-control by increasing (decreasing) the choice share of healthy (unhealthy) food. We surmise that the comparison process that joint evaluation triggers, increases the impact of the dimension that is the hardest to judge, which is often the health dimension. We found evidence for this mechanism and ruled out two alternative explanations of ease of justification and goal highlight for this effect. We discuss the theoretical contributions, the methodological implication for the self-control literature, and managerial implications of our research.

**Keywords:** *self-control; choice; evaluation*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour