

Stressed or Self-Important? Intentions vs. Perceptions When Communicating Busyness

Maria Giulia Trupia
IESE Business School
Cassie Mogilner Holmes
UCLA
Isabelle Engeler
IESE Business School

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Abstract

Busyness plagues modern society. Feeling like they have too much to do and not enough time to do it, people seek social support by communicating their busyness to others. However, as busyness has become a status symbol, others might instead perceive this communication as an effort to impress rather than connect. In six pre-registered studies (N=5,227), we measured how people feel and are perceived as feeling when communicating busyness, as well as their actual and perceived intentions. The results show that though communicating busyness is primarily an expression of stress, which is shared intending to connect, there is a systematic miscalibration such that others over-perceive communicating busyness as expressing importance with the intention to impress. Observing the interpersonal costs, we also found that informing people of this miscalibration helps them change the way they communicate their busyness to more accurately convey their feelings, intentions, and liking.

Keywords: *busyness; time; self-other miscalibration*

Track: Consumer Behaviour