

Proximal Depiction Effect: Influencing Consumption Behavior through the Product's Spatial Distance within Food Advertisements

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Cite as:

Malik Sumit, Sayin Eda, Jain Kriti (2019), Proximal Depiction Effect: Influencing Consumption Behavior through the Product's Spatial Distance within Food Advertisements. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 48th, (8738)

Paper presented at the 48th Annual EMAC Conference, Hamburg, May 24-27, 2019.



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Abstract

Exposure to food pictures has been shown to influence an individuals' taste perception, purchase intention and satiation. We extend this literature by investigating the effect of food depictions, with products varying on spatial distance, within an advertisement visual. Our research shows that proximal, up-and-close, depiction of food products might result in heightened consumption responses. This effect is driven by greater perceptions of tastiness evoked by the proximal depiction – but, only for unhealthy (not healthy) food products. Furthermore, we find that multiple exposure to spatially proximal (vs. distant) depictions of unhealthy food products is likely to intensify satiation, thereby reversing the effect of a single exposure. Across three studies, we investigate the “proximal depiction effect” and rule-out alternate interpretations of perceptual fluency and portion-size perception.

Keywords: *Food Advertising; Spatial Distance; Over-consumption*

Track: Consumer Behaviour