

Does Multitasking Change Consumers' Behavior?

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Abstract

Does multitasking change how consumers think about products and behaviors? Despite the ubiquity of multitasking, prior research has ignored potential carryover effects of concurrent task performance on the way consumers interpret subsequently products and events. The present research evinces that overuse of updating, an executive function specific to multitasking and necessary for construing actions abstractly, reduces the likelihood that it will be used on subsequent tasks, thus having important impact on consumer behavior. Accordingly, our study results show that overuse of updating (i.e., multitasking) reduces an individual's propensity to construe actions in abstract (vs. concrete) terms. Further, we rule out general cognitive depletion as the explanation for such carryover effects by establishing that cognitive engagement (i.e., accuracy) only impacts abstractness of thinking in the multitasking, but not in the task-switching condition.

Keywords: *Multitasking; construal level theory; cognitive updating*

Track: Consumer Behaviour