

# Good Buzz, Bad Buzz: Mobile Vibrations as Rewards and Modifiers of Consumer Choice

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## **Abstract**

Many people spend a large portion of their day interacting with vibrating mobile devices, yet how we perceive the vibrotactile sensations emitted by these devices, and their effect on consumer choice is largely unknown. Building on haptic sensory processing research, we examine the functional relationship between vibration duration and perception, and vibrational stimuli as rewards and modifiers of choice. We find that mobile vibrations of an intermediate duration are consistently perceived as rewarding and can boost purchasing in an ecological online shopping environment, whereas short or long durations are perceived as neutral or punishing, respectively. We further show that these effects are amplified for impulsive consumers and relate to a range of demographic and psychological trait variables. Our findings have important implications for the effective design of haptic human-machine interfaces in marketing and the role of vibrotactile stimuli as a novel form of reward.

**Keywords:** *vibration; haptics; consumer*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour