‘Hot stuff’: Food is More Desirable with Dynamic Food-Extrinsic Temperature Cues

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Abstract

Acknowledging the importance of the warmth of food, advances in digital technology have enabled post-production augmentation, and new techniques such as dynamic steam effect can add steaming textures to food images to enhance the impression of freshness and warmth. Three online experimental studies were conducted to examine how such visually animated textures impact people’s temperature expectations and product preferences for foodstuffs. Results indicated that including steaming animation in food advertisements (Ad) led to increased food desirability, preceded by and driven by the heightened temperature expectation. Meanwhile, implied animation did not produce such an effect. Further, the attractiveness of the food images was found to be a boundary condition for the effect of dynamic temperature visual cue: steam animation proved more effective in enhancing participants’ positive evaluations when the food images were less appealing. Such an effect exerts the potential to motivate individuals to explore novel (seemingly unappealing) foods.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Attitude, Cognition, Consumer Behaviour, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

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