

The “Fast Meal = Fast Food” Intuition - The Effect of Consumption Time Pressure on Fast-Food Choice

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Abstract

In modern society, people are under increasing time pressure as their lives are getting busier than ever. Under constant time pressure, people are sacrificing their health. Past research has documented numerous evidence for a negative correlation between lack of time and unhealthy diet. However, causal evidence is lacking and the mechanism underlying this correlation is inconclusive. This research shows that when consumers are under time pressure for eating, they are more prone to choose fast-food. This choice is driven by an over-generalization of a “fast meal = fast food” intuition. The intuition is building on the fast preparation nature of fast-food. However, consumers over-generalize shorter preparation to “fast eating”, even when fast-food is not actually faster to eat. We rule out experienced anxiety/stress as the alternative explanation, and we show this effect can be debiased. Two field studies and three lab experiments provide convergent support for the proposed effect.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making, Public Policy*

Track: Consumer Behaviour