

Lack of Autonomy and Spontaneous Recovery from Hedonic Decline

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Cite as:

Si Kao, Hu Jing, Dai Xianchi (2025), Lack of Autonomy and Spontaneous Recovery from Hedonic Decline. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (125215)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



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Abstract

Individuals experience a hedonic decline with time and repeated consumption. However, this decline is not endless. With time, people's preferences typically return to their pre-consumption level, which is known as "spontaneous recovery". Previous research has focused on how to slow unwanted hedonic decline while overlooking how consumers recover from it. Our research addresses this gap by investigating how a lack of autonomy influences the recovery process from hedonic decline. Across four laboratory studies, we find that consumers recover more slowly from hedonic decline when their choice autonomy is constrained. This research highlights the importance of empowering consumers with meaningful choices, particularly in industries with repeat purchases. By prioritizing consumer autonomy, marketers can effectively avoid factors that hinder recovery, ultimately enhancing overall well-being and satisfaction.

Keywords: Autonomy, Hedonic Decline, Spontaneous Recovery

Track: Consumer Behavior