

How Major Life Transitions Shape Parenting Variety Seeking in Household Consumption

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Abstract

Major life transitions can reshape everyday consumption, yet evidence on how specific transitions influence variety seeking remains limited. This paper examines how the transition to parenthood affects household variety seeking in household consumption. Using NielsenIQ Consumer Panel data and a difference-in-differences (DiD) framework, the study first replicates prior evidence that becoming a parent reduces variety seeking. Extending the analysis to cover 2004–2020 shows that this decline is persistent across a longer historical window. The paper then investigates heterogeneity across product types, revealing that the reduction in variety seeking is concentrated in hedonic categories, while utilitarian purchases remain broadly stable. Together, the findings demonstrate that parenthood systematically dampens exploratory consumption and that these behavioural shifts vary meaningfully by product category.

Track: Consumer Behaviour