

Do Price Promotions Form Preferences for Ultra-Processed Foods?

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Abstract

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) account for much of the energy consumed in modern diets and are heavily promoted in retail settings. We study whether repeated exposure to UPF promotions shapes consumer preferences over time. Using weekly purchase data from a Dutch household panel linked to barcode-level nutrition information, we estimate a consumption-capital model in which current demand reflects both the contemporaneous promotion environment and a slowly evolving stock of past UPF consumption. Preliminary results indicate moderate short-run responses to promotions and strong persistence in demand, implying that repeated promotional exposure and the consumption it induces, can accumulate over time and increase long-run UPF preferences. These findings suggest that retail promotion strategies may contribute to the formation and reinforcement of unhealthy consumption patterns.

Track: Methods, Modelling & Marketing Analytics