Will Dangling the Carrot Make Them Eat It? an Exploration of Children’s Perceptions Towards Rewards For Healthy Food

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This study explored children’s experiences with and perceptions towards rewards for food. This study explores how children perceived rewards for healthy food. A Consumer Socialization framework (Roedder-John, 1999) was applied to understand how a child’s consumer socialization stage influences their perceptions towards the attributes of concrete and abstract rewards. Phenomenological interviews were used to gain understanding of children’s perspectives and enabled the identification of the attributes of rewards which are most persuasive in influencing children’s healthy food choices. References Roedder John Deborah (1999) Consumer Socialization of Children: A Retrospective Look At Twenty-Five Years of Research Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 26, December (p.183-213)

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Reference

The Impact of Mood on Consumer Choice: Compromise or Not?

Cheng Qiu, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

This research investigates how mood influences consumer choice among a low-end option, a middle (compromise) option, and a high-end option. Previous research suggests that mood may affect consumer judgment through different mechanisms (Schwarz and Clore 2007) which bear different implications for the present research. One possibility is that mood may have motivational impact which drives consumer choice. Happy consumers may wish to maintain their pleasant feelings whereas unhappy consumers may seek mood-lifting opportunities (Isen 1984). In this case, consumers are more likely to choose the compromise option if they are in a good mood than if they are in a bad mood (Lin, Yen, and Chuang 2006). This is because the compromise option is perceived to be a safe choice (Simonson 1989). Such a low-risk choice may contribute to maintaining a good mood while at the same time entail less mood-lifting potential than a high-risk one (Nygren et al. 1996; Raghunathan and Pham 1999).

A second possibility is that mood may signal how benign or problematic the environment is and influence information processing (Schwarz and Clore 2007). Happy consumers tend to process information in a top-down manner, which may facilitate seeing the relationship among the options and their respective mood-management property. Happy consumers may therefore be more attracted by the compromise option than those in a neutral mood. When consumers are in a bad mood, however, they tend to process information in a bottom-up manner based on an assessment of individual product features. When this happens, consumers may be less likely to see the relationship among the options and the corresponding mood-management potential. Rather, they may be more sensitive to negative product features than to positive ones, and give the former more weight in their decisions (Adaval 2001). In this case, the low-end option may be assessed most negatively in terms of quality whereas the high-end option may be assessed most negatively in terms of price. Greater weight given to these negative features may lead unhappy consumers to shun the low-end and high-end options, resulting in choosing the compromise option more often than those in a neutral mood. Thus, consumers in both positive and negative moods may be inclined to choose the compromise option.

Further, this research proposes that the first possibility is more likely to occur when mood clarity is high, whereas the second possibility is more likely to occur when mood clarity is low. This is because for the mood-lifting motivation to guide consumer decision, consumers need to assess their current mood and forecast future mood after choice (Andrade 2005). Thus, when consumers have higher (lower) clarity about their current mood, they may be more (less) likely to act in accordance with a mood-lifting motivation. In the previous research demonstrating the first possibility (Lin, Yen, and Chuang 2006), participants assessed their mood before they made the choice, which may have enhanced mood clarity. In the study reported below, participants did not assess their mood until after making product choices. We expect that the relatively low mood clarity may yield a different pattern of findings as suggested by the second possibility.

Experiment

The experiment had a 3 (mood: positive vs. neutral vs. negative) x 2 (justification for choice: provided vs. not provided) between-subjects design. The latter factor was added to show a boundary condition where the predicted mood effect would diminish if people were induced to deliberate over their decisions and make easily justifiable choices.