Motivated Bias in Affective Forecasting
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Affective forecasters exhibit an impact bias, overestimating the intensity and duration of their emotional reaction to future events. We suggest that forecasters make extreme forecasts to motivate themselves to produce desirable outcomes. In two studies, affective forecasts were more extreme when outcomes were more important, and when forecasters could influence an outcome than when it was determined but unknown. Subsequent studies found that the extremity of forecasts determined the amount of mental and physical effort forecasters expended to produce desirable outcomes. Errors in affective forecasting may thus not be solely cognitive in origin, but have a motivated component as well.

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In this presentation we discuss early findings that explore how restraint behaviors, cognitive processing and a rich food environment interact to affect consumption. This research adds to our understanding of how product and marketplace cues influence consumption for restrained and unrestrained eaters. In addition, we hope our research provides information to empower consumers to use their cognitive and behavioral resources to facilitate healthy food choices. As public policy officials work to combat the obesity epidemic, understanding the influences on food consumption will inform decision-makers as they implement remedies designed to reduce over-consumption and promote healthy lifestyles.

References

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To Do with Others or to Have (or To Do Alone)? The Value of Experiences over Material Possessions Depends on the Involvement of Others
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How does money promote happiness? Recent studies have addressed this question. People may intentionally buy hedonic goods to increase their happiness (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Spending money on others makes people happier than spending money on themselves (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008). Finally, spending money on experiences makes people happier than spending money on material objects (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). The present research focuses on the distinction between experiences and material possessions, and their relative effects on happiness.

There are a number of possible reasons why experiential purchases might make people happier than material purchases, but one that has received little attention is the social nature of many experiences. It may be that experiences bring people more happiness than material goods to the extent that others are involved in the activity. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) noted the importance of consumption for satisfying desires for belongingness and connectedness, and recent research has verified that experiential purchases satisfy relatedness needs more...