CAN WE CORRECT VARIETY-SEEKING BIAS? CONSUMER'S ILLUSION AND ROBUSTNESS OF VARIETY-SEEKING BIAS

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Previous research suggests that consumer's simultaneous (vs. sequential) choice of multiple options leads to excessive variety-seeking, which in turn results in a lower consumption satisfaction (e.g., Simonson, 1990). Current research attempts to investigate the mechanism driving consumer's variety-seeking behavior and test several strategies to enhance consumption satisfaction. In study 1, participants who consume seven yogurts for seven consecutive days reported higher enjoyment when they consumed only their favorite flavor compared with when they consumed variety of flavors. However, participants failed to accurately predict their consumption satisfaction and change in preferences over time. Study 2 demonstrates the robustness of variety-seeking bias. I show that the resilience of variety-seeking is in part due to the biased memory of past experience. Contradicting to the higher real time satisfaction for the uniform (vs. variety) choice, people's remembered evaluation was distorted in a way that favors variety consumption. Finally, study 3 showed that the pursuit of variety in simultaneous choice was difficult to correct through learning from past experiences. Manipulations to shift attention to prior suboptimal consumption experiences and to mentally simulate the sequential choice did not result in reduced variety seeking.

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