

The Impact of the “Cold Ambient Color = Healthy” Intuition on Consumer Food Choice

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Abstract : Ambient color temperature is one of the most ubiquitous factors in retailing. However, there is limited research regarding the effect of cold versus warm ambient color on consumers' food consumption. This research investigates an unexplored lay belief named the “cold ambient color = healthy” intuition and its impact on food choice. We demonstrate that consumers have built the “cold ambient color = healthy” intuition, such that they infer that a restaurant with a cold-colored ambiance is more likely to sell healthy food than a warm-colored restaurant. This deep-seated intuition also guides consumers' food choices. We find that using a cold (vs. warm) ambient color increases the choice of healthy food, which offers insights into healthy diet promotion for retailers and policymakers. Theoretically, our work contributes to the literature on color psychology, sensory marketing, and food consumption.

Keywords : ambient color temperature, cold ambient color, food choice, consumer wellbeing

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