

Individuals Diurnal Preferences and Temporal Behavior

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether consumer response and behavior is affected by their diurnal preferences while tested at different times of the day (TOD's). All subjects were asked to complete an MEQ questionnaire that deciphered whether they were a morning or evening types. After separating the two chronotypes, they were asked to perform and evaluate two major tasks. In study 1, subjects were also measured on their task alertness along their time perception after the completion of a marketing survey. In study 2, similar measures were taken following an online task. Results clearly show that circadian rhythm strongly influence peoples time perception, time evaluation, task behavior, and task completion rate.

The contribution of this paper is two fold: First to bring the attention of the marketing research community the theoretical and practical aspects of one of the most important biological rhythm expressed by individuals' diurnal preferences. Second, to use an ongoing marketing research project, on consumers' time perception and behavior, to illustrate how individuals' behavioral and perceptual differences might be a result of their diurnal preferences. Specially, this paper describes an initial exploration of this subject in marketing by first presenting some theoretical considerations linking circadian rhythm to consumer behavior. Second, the article extends a recent pilot study and introduces two studies designed to examine the influence of time-of-day (TOD) in common consumer situations, consumers' perception and evaluation of tasks duration. Third, by drawing on the research results, theoretical and practical implications for marketing research are provided. For example, Marketers might influence the perception and evaluation of time-intensive activities, like waiting, driving and shopping, by controlling for circadian phase. Finally, the identification of situational factors that account for variation in patterns of time judgment may be useful in classifying various activities, and enhancing the effectiveness of marketing programs designed to promote, for example, leisure

and recreation activities. Finally, further investigations into the role of TOD on consumer behavior and new avenues for marketing research are suggested.