

Better memory makes people tire of experiences more quickly

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People with stronger working memories tire of experiences more quickly, according to a new study that can have implications on product marketing and consumer behavior. Credit: modup.net

We're fickle creatures. At least if we can remember to be, according to a

new study led by a University of Kansas researcher of marketing and consumer behavior.

"People with larger working memory capacities actually encode information more deeply," said Noelle Nelson, lead author of the research published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. "They remember more details about the things they've experienced, and that leads them to feel like they've had it more. That feeling then leads to the large [capacity](#) people getting tired of experiences faster."

The study could have implications for marketers seeking to maintain interest in their products and brands. Consumers could also benefit from the research because it provides a window into how memory could be the key to becoming satiated, especially on products or habits they hope to quit, such as eating [unhealthy foods](#).

"Our findings suggest that if they can enhance their memory for the other times they've eaten these foods, they may feel satiated and then not seek out those unhealthy things," said Nelson, an assistant professor of marketing and [consumer behavior](#) in the KU School of Business.

Nelson co-authored the study with Joseph Redden, associate professor of marketing at the University of Minnesota.

They conducted four separate experiments with undergraduate student participants. The researchers measured people's working memory capacities in different ways, such as how well they could remember a string of letters or how they performed on the Simon memory game where users must try to repeat a series of tones and lights.

Then participants then performed a task where they would eventually become tired of what they experienced, like viewing paintings or listening to music.

"We found that their capacity predicted how fast they got tired of the art or music," Nelson said. "People with larger memory capacities satiated on these things more quickly than people with smaller capacities. Essentially, large capacity people perceive that they've experienced things more times because they remember those experiences better."

Past research has only speculated on the link between memory and the rate of satiation, but this study provides direct evidence, she said.

Marketers could perhaps use this type of research to craft strategies on ways to keep people interested longer.

"For example, introducing new products or having distractions in ads might help break up the satiation process because they disrupt memory," Nelson said.

The researchers didn't specifically study overeating or unhealthy foods, but the findings should extend to those types of experiences, she said.

"Because a big part of overeating is psychological, a psychological solution such as [memory](#) processes, could help people control their eating," Nelson said. "Consumers might be able to satiate more quickly by simply recalling the last several times they ate."

More information: Noelle M. Nelson et al, Remembering Satiation: The Role of Working Memory in Satiation, *Journal of Consumer Research* (2017). [DOI: 10.1093/jcr/ucx056](https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx056)

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