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Wishful hearing: The effect of chronic dieting on auditory perceptual biases and eating behavior

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RUNNING HEAD: THE EFFECT OF CHRONIC DIETING ON AUDITORY PERCEPTUAL BIASES AND EATING BEHAVIOR**Abstract**

In this research, I propose a novel theoretical phenomenon called “wishful hearing,” which establishes that ambient product sounds can be perceived as more spatially proximal when internal motivations (i.e., chronic dieting) render the product more desirable and as a result, lead to increased purchase intentions and consumption. Across three studies, I document the existence of wishful hearing and demonstrate how this phenomenon influences people’s food consumption decisions. The first study provides field evidence of the phenomenon of “wishful hearing”. The second two experimental studies demonstrate that individuals’ dietary motivations influence their perceptions of the proximity of product sounds, and this proximity is in turn associated with greater purchase intentions and food consumption.

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