A Feast for the Eyes: How Augmented Reality Influences Food Desirability

Augmented reality (AR) has generated enormous industry investment and buzz, and the food and beverage industry has been quick to embrace the technology in hopes of transforming the customer experience. However, limited research had empirically explored how this nascent technology might actually influence consumer judgements and behaviors. Our research demonstrates that because AR visually superimposes objects onto a consumer's real-time environment, it increases the ease with which consumers mentally simulate consuming a pictured food, which can in turn increase their desire for the food, purchase likelihood, and consumption enjoyment. We also show that the increased mental simulation is itself preceded and driven by an increased sense of personal relevance, and we find the positive effect of AR presentation is exaggerated for those individuals who lack prior experience with the food.