

# A Systematic Review of the Literature on Busy Mindset and Time Pressure

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## Abstract

In recent years, in the fields of psychology and marketing, the research on busyness has been paid more attention. Time pressure and busy mindset are both related to the broader concept of busyness, but they are both related and different. This paper summarizes the related research on busy mindset and time pressure, compares their concept, difference and connection, and their impact on consumer behavior. Finally, this paper concludes with current research status and a future research agenda.

## Keywords

**Busy Mindset; Time Pressure; Consumer Behavior.**

## 1. Introduction

More and more people feel busier than ever. Although past studies have shown that the subjective perception of busyness and time pressure may not be the same, research in the field of marketing and psychology pays more attention to people's lack of time and time pressure, and the research on busyness is relatively less.

As the busy lifestyle comes into people's field of vision, under the exaggeration of the mass media, it affects people's lives more and more, and research on busyness begins to receive more attention. Busy mindset and time pressure are both related to the broader concept of busyness, but the current research on the difference and connection between the two is still very limited, and it has not established a clear definition and reference for future research. This paper will sort out and compare the research on busyness and time pressure, and provide some references for future research.

## 2. The Concept of Busy Mindset and Time Pressure

Gershuny proposed that being busy is a subjective perception, feeling that there are a lot of things to do or the next time is occupied by tasks, which comes from personal subjective evaluation of activity arrangements [1]. Although the number of tasks to be completed in the available time can predict how busy a person is, the subjective perception of busyness varies from person to person. In general, busy mindset is a feeling that there are many things waiting to be done, and there is no need to complete a long list of tasks within a short time limit, and it must be distinguished from time pressure. Bellezza mentioned that people's feelings of busyness are more derived from work-related tasks and activities [2]. Kim's research further found that the feeling of busyness needs to come from the work done actively rather than forced to complete [3]. Wilcox proposed to define busyness as a subjective state perception in which a variety of tasks need to be completed within a certain period of time [4].

Time pressure is one of the common pressures in today's life. Maule defined time pressure as a state of stress that requires a task to be completed in a limited time [5]. Therefore, previous

research usually used to give participants less time to complete tasks to manipulate time pressure [6].

Szollos defined time pressure as a cognitive experience, that is, the experience that there is not enough time to do things, and it is also the emotional feelings such as urgency and anxiety caused by the individual to do a lot of activities within a limited time [7]. Zakay proposed that time pressure is mainly an individual's subjectively perceived emotional response caused by shortening the time to complete a task [8]. Svenson found that time-limiting stimuli triggers corresponding emotional changes, which affects the individual's feelings and leads to time pressure [9].

### **3. The Difference and Connection between Busy Mindset and Time Pressure**

According to previous studies, definition of busyness and time pressure is different. Busy mindset emphasizes subjective perception [3], while time pressure emphasizes the sense of limitation in completing tasks [9]. However, from the perspective of the former dependent variables, busy mindset and time pressure are subjective feelings caused by completing tasks within a limited time.

People have different feelings about being busy and time pressure [10]. Kim made people think about the meaning of busyness and time pressure in the experimental research. The results showed that people think that the following description can represent busyness: I am busy; I have a lot of things to do; I am working hard to complete various tasks. People think that the following description can represent time pressure: I feel that there is not enough time; I am worried that everything will not be completed; the deadline is coming [3]. This experiment allows people to understand that people's understanding of busyness and time pressure is essentially different.

Kim further analyzed the main characteristics of the busy mindset in the research: firstly, busyness refers to the feeling that the individual has a lot of things to do; secondly, as long as it is not a task that has to be engaged, being busy does not generally lead to negative emotions; finally, busyness activities related to work are positively correlated, and activities related to leisure are negatively correlated.

The perception of busyness generally produces positive emotions, and time pressure reduces people's sense of happiness [11], and lead to negative behaviors such as inactivity and excessive consumption of junk food [12]. Secondly, in previous studies, the busy mindset and the manipulation of time pressure are also inconsistent. The manipulation of time pressure mainly allows the subjects to complete the assigned tasks in a relatively short time, while the manipulation of the busy mindset is to remind the subjects to recall their busy experiences. Therefore, busyness and time pressure are two related and different concepts.

### **4. The Impact of Busy Mindset and Time Pressure on Consumer Behavior**

Previous studies have shown that the perception of busyness will reduce people's self-attribution after missing the task completion deadline, reduce negative emotions, thereby reducing procrastination and improving work efficiency. When people feel that they use their time in an effective way, they can complete more tasks than those who perceive themselves as inefficient [13]. Xinqian Li studied the influence of consumers' subjective busyness on the compromise effect, proving that subjective busyness negatively affects consumers' preference for compromise options, and verified the mediating role of decision-making confidence between busyness and preference for compromise options [14]. Kim has conducted an in-depth study of the influence of busyness on self-control behavior. Kim found that when the busy

mindset is activated, people have higher self-control behavior; He also verified the mediating role of self-importance between busy mindset and self-control behavior and the adjustment of professional ethics between busy mindset and self-importance Role [3]. Kim's research found that time pressure has a negative impact on savings behavior. When a busy state of mind is accompanied by high time pressure, any positive effects caused by a busy state of mind will be weakened.

Young's research found that individuals are more inclined to use a heuristic strategy of rapid processing under time pressure rather than an analytical strategy that needs to consider all aspects of information, which leads to worse cognitive performance [15]. Time pressure will not only have a negative impact, but will also increase the individual's arousal level, making the individual more concentrated and improving the level of work concentration [16, 17, 18].

Gardner's research found that time pressure positively predicts the degree of arousal experienced by an individual, and the level of arousal increases with the increase of time pressure. The higher the arousal level is, the more individuals can mobilize their positive state to complete work tasks, and high arousal level can also reduce work distraction [19].

## 5. Conclusion

This paper reviews the related research on busy mindset and time pressure from three aspects: concept, difference and connection, and impact on consumer behavior. The results of the research find that busy mindset and time pressure are different in terms of concepts, characteristics, consumer cognition, and influence on consumer behavior. Busy mindset emphasizes subjective perception, while time pressure focuses more on objective time constraints. Previous studies have shown that a busy mindset brings more positive effects, while time pressure brings more negative effects. In the field of marketing, research on the impact of busy mindset on consumer behavior is relatively scarce, and there is no theoretical framework worthy of reference; the research context of time pressure is relatively limited and needs to be further expanded. In addition, there is a lack of systematic research on the influence of busy mindset and time pressure on consumer behavior. The different mechanisms of busy mindset and time pressure need to be further studied and discussed.

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