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Initial Post

by Ruben Marques - Monday, 24 November 2025, 10:40 PM

I find Gu et al.'s (2023) argument regarding the "halo effect" and time dynamics a good practical case on how we can assess and improve subjective evaluation accuracy. As the study showed, initial positive impressions, particularly the ones that originate from visual aesthetics (as highlighted by the authors) can lead users to overestimate other qualities like usability, but that this bias fades over time.

This also resonates with Minge and Thüring's (2018) observation that our emotions shift during product interaction, moving from anticipation (pre-use) driven by visual appeal to a reflective post-use assessment. In my own personal view this can also include marketing campaigns that are created before product launch that are highly curated, helping lead to a initial inflated feeling of what the software can actually do.
Rogers (2023) reinforces why designers must understand these emotional trajectories to forge genuine user connections.

For the Systems Development Life Cycle, this matters since immediate feedback or what we can consider "novelty" demonstrates that users initially focus on the "appeal" rather than functional "utility", and only by waiting a certain amount of time will we be able to actually assess the actual satisfaction in regard to functionality.

We can also correlate and potentially integrate this into Behavior-Driven Development (BDD) while maintaining secure coding practices:

- Time-Phased BDD Scenarios: Since perceived behavior evolves with familiarity, Wu et al. (2022) suggest crafting user stories that reflect different interaction phases, addressing the "Pre-Use Phase" and the "Use Phase" (usability and functionality).
- Security will always be an Anchor: Khair (2018) mentions that secure coding practices protect user data and maintain this trust. So once the initial "shiny object syndrome" fades away, users become more critical of what actually matters most, the ability for a system to actually solve their pain points through its functionality and use cases with efficiency, efficacy and minimal to no security lapses.

References:

Gu, Q., Tang, W. and Xue, C. (2023) 'The Effect of Time Lapse on the Halo Effect in the Subjective Evaluation of Digital Interfaces', *Design, User Experience, and Usability*, pp. 171–183.

Khair, M.A. (2018) 'Security-Centric Software Development: Integrating Secure Coding Practices into the Software Development Lifecycle', *Technology & Management Review*, 3(1), pp. 12-26.

Minge, M. and Thüring, M. (2018) 'Hedonic and pragmatic halo effects at early stages of user experience', *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 109, pp. 13-25.

Rogers, Y. (2023) *Interaction design: Beyond human-computer interaction*. John Wiley & Sons Canada, Limited.

Wu, J., Chen, H., Li, Y. and Liu, Y. (2022) 'A behavioral assessment model for emotional persuasion driven by agent-based decision-making', *Expert Systems with Applications*, 204, p. 117556.

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Re: Initial Post

by Victor Angelier - Tuesday, 9 December 2025, 5:48 PM

Hi Ruben,

Thank you for your engaging post and the thoughtful extensions to Gu et al. (2023). I agree that early aesthetic impressions can inflate perceived usability due to the halo effect, with biases diminishing as familiarity grows, your point about marketing priming pre-use expectations is particularly insightful and aligns well with anticipatory emotional states.

Your reference to Minge and Thüring (2018) effectively highlights the shift from hedonic (aesthetic-driven) to pragmatic halo effects, reinforcing why immediate feedback often captures novelty rather than stable satisfaction like I discovered in my initial post. This temporal dynamic is crucial in SDLC contexts, where prototype evaluations risk requirements misalignment if conducted too early. I call this first impression bias, do you think this is a correct definition?.

I appreciate your attempt to integrate BDD through phased user stories, though the connection to halo bias could be stronger – BDD excels at behavioural verification but less at capturing evolving emotional reactions as described in the CUE model (Van der Linden et al., 2019). Secure coding, while vital for long-term trust, seems somewhat peripheral to improving subjective evaluation accuracy.

Overall, your marketing perspective adds valuable real-world nuance. In practice, combining lightweight longitudinal surveys (e.g., initial + after one week) with BDD scenarios could mitigate novelty bias without excessive overhead. Have you encountered tools that effectively track emotional shifts across SDLC phases?

Great contribution – it broadens the discussion productively.

References

Gu, Q., Tang, W. and Xue, C. (2023) 'The effect of time lapse on the halo effect in the subjective evaluation of digital interfaces', in Design, User Experience, and Usability (Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol. 14032). Cham: Springer, pp. 171–183. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-35702-2_12 (Accessed: 9 December 2025).

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Van der Linden, J. et al. (2019) 'User experience and social influence: a new perspective for UX theory', in A. Marcus and W. Wang (eds) Design, User Experience, and Usability. Design Philosophy and Theory (Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol. 11583). Cham: Springer, pp. 98–112. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-23570-3_9 (Accessed: 9 December 2025).

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Re: Initial Post

by Doug Millward - Friday, 12 December 2025, 6:32 PM

Hi Both
this is an excellent discussion. I agree with Victor that even BDD (that tries to expand our scope beyond the simple requirements - specification - design - build - test) of the common SDLC still fails to include many of the parameters that affect our aesthetic understanding of the user experience, are we arguing that the SDLC needs to be expanded to include marketing and even social media reviews of software? Does the impact of a good (or bad) evaluation by a social media "influencer" have a significant effect on how we evaluate our user experience?

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Re: Initial Post

by Victor Angelier - Saturday, 13 December 2025, 12:49 PM

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I would be cautious about expanding the SDLC to formally include marketing activities. In my experience, aligning design or evaluation too closely with sales or promotional objectives often distorts feedback rather than enriching it. Marketing optimises persuasion, whereas UX evaluation should optimise understanding.

Social media responses can be informative, but only if treated as emergent collective signals rather than authoritative judgements. Influencer impact, in particular, is not a communicative problem but an epistemic systems problem: it amplifies opinions by exploiting attention asymmetries, not by improving evaluative accuracy. Attempting to counter influencers directly is ineffective; instead, their influence must be mitigated by removing the conditions under which it becomes dominant, such as opaque evaluation criteria, lack of longitudinal feedback, or over-reliance on early impressions.

From this perspective, social feedback may have value as a supplementary, post-release signal (e.g. detecting mismatches between intended and perceived value), but it should not be treated as evidence of UX quality within the SDLC. Bias-aware, time-phased evaluation and well-defined usability criteria remain more reliable than externally mediated popularity signals.

In short, the SDLC does not need more marketing inputs; it needs stronger epistemic discipline in how experiential data is interpreted.

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Re: Initial Post

by [Lauren Pechey](#) - Tuesday, 16 December 2025, 6:16 PM

Hi Ruben! :)

Your post offers a clear and persuasive interpretation of Gu et al.'s (2023) findings on the halo effect and the role of time in subjective evaluation. I agree that early impressions, often driven by visual aesthetics or marketing, can inflate perceptions of usability, a phenomenon also observed by Minge and Thüring (2018) in their work on hedonic and pragmatic halo effects. This reinforces the risk of relying solely on first-use feedback when evaluating digital interfaces.

Your discussion of emotional trajectories across pre-use and post-use phases aligns well with broader interaction design research, which emphasises that user satisfaction evolves as novelty fades and functional utility becomes more salient (Rogers, 2023; Hassenzahl, 2023). As you note, this has important implications for the SDLC, as premature evaluations may prioritise appeal over long-term usability and system effectiveness (Gu et al., 2023).

I also found your integration of BDD particularly compelling. Time-phased user stories, as suggested by Wu et al. (2022), provide a practical mechanism for capturing changing user expectations across interaction stages. Additionally, your emphasis on secure coding as a trust anchor is well-founded; once initial novelty diminishes, reliability and security become central to sustained user confidence (Khair, 2018).

Overall, your contribution effectively demonstrates how time-aware UX evaluation, combined with iterative development and security-focused practices, can improve both subjective assessment accuracy and long-term system quality.

Thank you for your contribution!

References:

Gu, Q., Tang, W. and Xue, C. (2023) The effect of time lapse on the halo effect in the subjective evaluation of digital interfaces. Design, User Experience, and Usability, pp. 171–183.

Hassenzahl, M. (2023) User Experience and Experience Design. 2nd edn. Cham: Springer.

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