Supporting Online Material for

On Making the Right Choice: The Deliberation-Without-Attention Effect

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Materials and Methods

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Materials and Methods

Study 1: Method

Participants and Design

Eighty undergraduate students of the University of Amsterdam were randomly

assigned to the cells of a 2 (Mode of Thought: Conscious versus Unconscious) x 2

(Complexity: Simple versus Complex) between-participants design. They received course

credits or 7 Euros in return.

Procedure and Materials

Participants read information about four hypothetical cars. Each car was either

described by four attributes (simple condition), or by twelve attributes (complex). The

attributes were either positive or negative. One car was characterized by 75% positive

attributes, two by 50% positive attributes, and one by 25% positive attributes (see

Appendix 1 for the materials). The attributes were presented one by one in random order

on a computer screen. Each attribute was presented for 8 seconds. After reading the

information about the four cars, participants were either assigned to a conscious thought

condition, or to an unconscious thought condition. In the conscious thought condition,

participants were asked to think about the cars carefully for four minutes. After that they

chose the car they thought was best. In the unconscious thought condition, participants

were distracted for four minutes and were told that after the period of distraction they

would be asked what the best car was. During the distraction period, participants solved anagrams.

The choice to choose a conscious thought (and unconscious thought) period of four minutes was based on earlier testing where participants were given different amounts of time to think and were asked whether the amount of time given was satisfactory. In experiments such as this, most people indicate that three to four minutes is enough.

Study 2: Method

Participants and Design

Fifty-nine undergraduate students of the University of Amsterdam were randomly assigned to the cells of a 2 (Mode of Thought: Conscious versus Unconscious) x 2 (Complexity: Simple versus Complex) between-participants design. They received course credits or 7 Euros in return.

Procedure and Materials

Study 2 was exactly the same as Study 1 with one exception. Rather than having participants choose their favorite car, participants gave their attitude towards each of the four individual cars. The attitudes towards the individual cars were measured by having participants click on a point on a line that was drawn between the poles "very negative" to "very positive". The computer transformed the position into a score on a 50-point scale (from –25 [very negative] to +25 [very positive]). The attitudes towards the four cars were measured in random order.

Study 3: Method

Pilot

We asked 61 undergraduate students how many aspects they would take into account by the purchase of forty different products, ranging from complex to simple. Answers had to be indicated on a five-point scale with the following scale points:

1:      1 aspect

2:      2-3 aspects

3:      3-5 aspects

4:      5-8 aspects

5:      9 or more aspects

This way, we obtained an average "complexity score" for forty different products. A list of these scores is presented in Appendix 2.

Actual study

Ninety-three undergraduate students were presented with the list of forty products that were used in the pilot-study. They were asked to pick a product from the list that they recently purchased and were asked the following questions: Which products did you purchase? Did you know the product before you went on the shopping trip (either by seeing it, or through internet or TV ads)? How much did you think about the product between seeing it for the first time and buying it? How satisfied are you with the product? The last two questions were answered on a 7-point scale.

Study 4: Method

On the basis of the pilot-study to Study 3, we selected two shops: One where people generally buy complex products (IKEA, where people mainly buy furniture), and

one where people generally buy simple products ("Bijenkorf", a department store comparable to Macy's where people buy clothes and small accessories). At the exit, shoppers were asked the following questions: What did you buy? How expensive was it? Did you know the product before you went on the shopping trip (either by seeing it, or through internet or TV ads)? Did you think about the product a lot between seeing it for the first time and buying it? The last question was answered on a 10-point scale. The interview ended with the request for a phone number so that people could be contacted later. A few weeks later, the shoppers were asked how satisfied they were with their purchase. This last question was answered on a 10-point scale. We were able to interview and later contact 46 IKEA shoppers and 69 Bijenkorf shoppers. As we only included participants who indicated that they bought a product they had come across before the shopping trip, the analyses are based on 27 IKEA shoppers and 27 Bijenkorf shoppers.

Before we performed our main analyses, we first confirmed that IKEA customers did indeed by products of more complexity than Bijenkorf customers. Based on the correlation between complexity and price in Study 3, one may expect IKEA purchases to be more expensive. Indeed, the average price of the IKEA products was 369 Euros (range 20 – 6000), whereas the average price in the Bijenkorf was 89 Euros (range 6 – 370).

Appendix 1: Materials used in studies 1 and 2. Note that in actual experiments, the

information was presented in random order. In the simple conditions, a subset of the

information was used. In the original study, the information was in Dutch.

The Hatsdun has good mileage
The Hatsdun has good handling
The Hatsdun has a large trunk
The Hatsdun is very new
The Hatsdun is available in many different colors
For the Hatsdun service is excellent
The Hatsdun has poor legroom
With the Hatsdun it is difficult to shift gears
The Hatsdun has cupholders
The Hatsdun has a sunroof
The Hatsdun is relatively good for the environment
The Hatsdun has a poor sound system
The Hatsdun is very new

The Kaiwa has good mileage
The Kaiwa has poor handling
The Kaiwa has a large trunk
The Kaiwa is available in many different colors
For the Kaiwa service is excellent
The Kaiwa has plenty of legroom
With the Kaiwa it is easy to shift gears
The Kaiwa has no cupholders
The Kaiwa has no sunroof
The Kaiwa is fairly good for the environment
The Kaiwa has a poor sound system
The Kaiwa is old

The Dasuka has poor mileage
The Dasuka has good handling
The Dasuka has a small trunk
The Dasuka is available in very few colors
For the Dasuka service is poor
The Dasuka has little legroom
With the Dasuka it is easy to shift gears
The Dasuka has cupholders
The Dasuka has a sunroof
The Dasuka is not very good for the environment
The Dasuka has a good sound system
The Dasuka is new

The Nabusi has poor mileage
The Nabusi has poor handling
The Nabusi has a small trunk
The Nabusi is available in many different colors
For the Nabusi service is poor
The Nabusi has plenty of legroom
With the Nabusi it is difficult to shift gears
The Nabusi has no cupholders
The Nabusi has a sunroof
The Nabusi is not very good for the environment
The Nabusi has a poor sound system
The Nabusi is old

Appendix 2: Complexity scores of forty different products

1. Car	4.03
2. Computer	3.93
3. Room*	3.88
4. Camera	3.49
5. Cell phone	3.38
6. CD player	3.28
7. Plane ticket	3.17
8. Bicycle	3.11
9. Couch	3.03
Winter coat	3.03
11. Bed	2.98
12. Closet	2.95
13. Desk	2.93
14. Shoes	2.91
15. Watch	2.82
16. Table	2.64
17. Chair	2.61
18. Book	2.56
19. Trousers	2.55
20. Dress	2.54
21. Curtains	2.52
22. Shirt	2.48
Skirt	2.48
24. DVD	2.44
25. Bedding	2.34
Lamp	2.34
27. CD	2.28
28. Mirror	2.26
29. Pot	2.25
30. Silverware	2.23
31. Glasses (drinking)	2.11
Alarm Clock	2.11
33. Vase	2.03
34. Shampoo	1.90
35. Detergent	1.83
36. Towel	1.79
37. Toothpaste	1.75
38. Oven mitts	1.66
39. Umbrella	1.64
40. Dishwashing brush	1.28

* This refers to renting rather than buying