

Chosen from the crowd: task complexity and attraction effects

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Abstract

Attraction effects defy regularity and have been found to influence decisions in thousands of articles across a wide range of fields, from marketing, to psychology, organizational behavior, finance, and even animal behavior. Underpinning almost the entirety of this research stream are empirical tests of choices involving up to 3 alternatives. It has been suggested that these effects will not occur as task complexity, or the number of alternative and attributes, increases. However, this has not been tested in the literature. 3 experiments in this study find support for attraction effects in more complex choice tasks than previously researched. These findings also contribute to a current debate regarding the role of cognitive resources in attraction effects. Furthermore, this research suggests marketers can create the conditions for attraction effects even in situations where customers are choosing from many more than 3 alternatives.

Keywords: *attraction effect; task complexity; choice*

Track: Consumer Behaviour