

Delaying the Resolution of Uncertainty: The Role of Discomfort and Excitement in Consumer Decision Making

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Abstract

This research examines how delaying the resolution of positive uncertainty elicits emotional responses that in turn spill over into consumers' appraisal of the stimulus. The results of three experiments in an uncertain promotional context show that delayed resolution elicits discomfort and excitement in respectively low and high construal individuals; these competing emotions impact consumers' purchase likelihood (PL). Low construals who faced delayed resolution, vs those who won the higher outcome immediately (outright win), experienced heightened discomfort that had a negative effect on PL. High construals in delayed resolution showed boosted excitement, vs those who won the lower outcome immediately (disappointing win). The intensified excitement had a positive spillover into PL. The competing forces of discomfort and excitement led to a net positive effect on PL. Hence, delayed resolution could be more effective than an immediate disappointing win and as effective as an outright win.

Keywords: *Promotions; Uncertainty; Excitement*

Track: Pricing & Promotions