

Why Low-Complexity Numbers Appeal to Consumers

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Abstract

In this research, we propose and demonstrate that consumers prefer products with low-complexity numbers (e.g., palindromes like 2442, or numbers with repeated digits like 5353) over high-complexity numbers (e.g., 2901). Taking an information theoretic approach, we argue that simple (vs. complex) numbers lead to more fluent processing and an experience of greater structure in one's environment. Four studies demonstrate that consumers prefer products with low-complexity numbers and are more satisfied with them; provide support for the mediating role of processing fluency and sense of structure; and show this preference is more pronounced among consumers with higher need for structure. Furthermore, low-complexity numbers can compensate for less desirable product attributes.

Keywords: *Numerical complexity; Fluency; Sense of structure*

Track: Consumer Behaviour