

# Not All Differences Are Made the Same: The Effect of Distribution on the Perceived Difference Between Scores

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## **Abstract**

We argue and show that the perceived difference between two scores (e.g., product ratings, prices, and academic grades), depends on the distribution of scores across the respective context. Across five studies, we have found that the score difference is perceived to be higher in areas of the score distribution where majority of scores are concentrated (i.e., fat part of the distribution) compared to areas where scores are less concentrated rank d. We further show that the proximity of the context upper bound to the fat part of the distribution does not explain the observed effect, thus ruling out the possibility that motivation for choosing or achieving better scores could affect the perceived difference between the two scores.

**Subject Areas:** *Decision-Making, Information Processing*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour