

The Curse of Preference: Adding A Common Negative Feature Decreases Consumer Choice of the More Desirable Product

May Yuan

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Leilei Gao

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cite as:

Yuan May, Gao Leilei (2024), The Curse of Preference: Adding A Common Negative Feature Decreases Consumer Choice of the More Desirable Product. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 53rd, (117734)

Paper from the 53rd Annual EMAC Conference, Bucharest, Romania, May 28-31, 2024



The Curse of Preference: Adding A Common Negative Feature Decreases Consumer Choice of the More Desirable Product

Abstract

Will consumers always choose a highly desirable product over a less desirable one? The current research shows that when a shared negative feature is introduced to the choice scenario after a tentative preference has been formed, consumers may switch away from the more desirable option and choose the less desirable option instead. The present research proposes an attention bias hypothesis to explain this counterintuitive phenomenon. According to the hypothesis, individuals primarily attend to the more preferred option, causing the shared negative information to be disproportionately magnified for that preferred option. Consequently, when consumers re-evaluate the options after the introduction of the shared negative feature, the advantage of the initially more preferred option may be offset by the magnified compromise involving the shared negative feature, leading consumers to switch away from that option.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

Track: Consumer Behaviour