

Disgusted by the target: Emotion based approach of the repulsion effect

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Abstract

Researchers have emphasized the necessity of understanding the repulsion effect and tried to identify its consistent underlying causes. However, it remains an active area of investigation. This paper proposes that the repulsion effect occurs when the negative emotion (disgust) projected by the decoy option is transferred to the target option. If so, it would decrease the attractiveness of the target option but vice versa to the competing option. The proposition was confirmed throughout five studies. Studies 1, 2, and 3 provides evidential results firmly verifying the proposed mechanism. Studies 4 and 5 explore more realistic scenarios (including a no-choice option) and consider individual differences by measuring disgust sensitivity. As predicted, both studies confirmed the occurrence of the repulsion effect and that it differs by one's tolerance in disgust. To conclude, our research indicates that the repulsion effect could be seen as a robust phenomenon when disgust is demonstrated.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

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