

How Maximizing and Satisficing Mindsets Impact Choice Overload: Exploring Cognitive Load

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Abstract

Across two choice-based experiments, this study investigates the cognitive mechanisms underlying the choice overload effect, focusing on the limitations of cognitive resources as outlined in Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988). Additionally, we examine how maximizing and satisficing mindsets influence cognitive load during choice tasks. Study 1 utilizes psychometric measures to assess cognitive load, while Study 2 extends this by incorporating task-evoked pupillary response (TEPR) as a physiological indicator of cognitive load. The findings reveal that cognitive load increases with larger choice set sizes. However, the evidence for mindset effects on cognitive load across varying choice set sizes remains weak. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes driving choice overload. We discuss context effects, particularly in relation to product categories, and offer implications for consumer decision-making strategies when managing choice complexity.

Keywords: Choice Overload, Maximizing Mindset, Cognitive Load Theory

Track: Consumer Behavior