Counting to a Round Number Precisely: Effect of Symmetric Chunking on Ease of the Process and Counting Confidence

Sanjeev Tripathi
Indian Institute of Management, Indore, India
Sakshi Aggarwal
Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Amritsar

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Abstract

In this research, we examine individuals' confidence in counting the number of objects. Intuitively, individuals should find it easier and be more confident in taking up a shorter counting task. However, we demonstrate that individuals are likely to find counting smaller magnitude non-round numbers more effortful than counting larger round numbers. We demonstrate that this happens as individuals like to make small chunks while counting. While counting round (vs. non-round) number of objects, the process of chunking is perceived to be easier, which positively impacts an individual's confidence in counting correctly. We also demonstrate a practical implication: in situations where individuals need to count money, they may buy a product marked at a high, round (vs. low, non-round) price. Six experiments examine this proposal using different numbers, objects, and contexts.

Keywords: *round numbers, confidence of counting, chunking*