

Week 10 Discussion Paper
Discussion Leaders: Woori Jo, Yeonsoo Lee, Youngjun Kim , Hyeonju Shin

Paper 1

The Effect of Purchase Quantity and Timing on Variety-Seeking Behavior
- Simonson, Itamar, 1990, Journal of Marketing Research

Woori Jo

Summary

The authors identified two consumer strategies for the purchase of multiple items. In one strategy, the consumer buys several items on one shopping trip and consumes the items over several consumption occasions. In the other strategy, the consumer buys one item at a time, just before each consumption occasion. The first strategy yielded more variety seeking than the second. Evidence from three studies is consistent.

Study 1

- The subjects were 67 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory marketing course. Subjects were told to imagine they were going to the supermarket with a shopping list that included eight items. Subjects were instructed to indicate the option(s) they would select.
- Results: In all seven product categories, subjects who made choices sequentially were less likely to select variety than subjects who simultaneously made multiple choices for sequential consumption.

Study 2

- In study 2, the subjects were 392 undergraduate students. Subjects made selections from a choice set of snacks at the beginning of a class meeting and received their selection(s) at the end of the class. In the sequential choices condition, subjects made one choice each week for three weeks. In the simultaneous choices for sequential consumption condition, subjects made all three choices at one time, but received only one item each week.
- Results: Subjects in the sequential choices condition were significantly less likely to select different items or variety than chose in the simultaneous choices for sequential consumption condition. Similarly, subjects in the sequential choices condition were also less likely to select variety than those who made simultaneous choices for immediate consumption.

Study 3

- The subjects were 46 undergraduate students enrolled in a psychology course. One group started with the simultaneous choices for sequential consumption task, followed by three selections for immediate consumption. In the second condition, subjects first selected one item for immediate consumption, then were informed that they would be given the same choice options in each of the following two weeks.
- Results: Subjects who identified only one acceptable snack in the first choice tended later to select that item for all weeks. Other subjects who had debated among three or more

acceptable options in the first choice tended to choose for later weeks those acceptable items that were not selected for immediate consumption.

Discussion Question

- This study says that consumers make more varied selection in simultaneous choices/sequential consumption situations. Do you think you'll show a similar propensity for consumption in that condition?
- The subjects were all undergraduate students(young generation). Do you think age would affect variety seeking behavior?
- In study 3, subjects who identified only one acceptable snack in the first choice tended later to select the same item for all weeks. What do you think is the reason for this result?

Paper 2

The Effect of Private versus Public Consumption on Variety Seeking Behavior

-Ratner, Rebecca K. and Barbara E. Kahn, 2002, Journal of Consumer Research

Yeonsoo Lee

Summary

This article examined the impact of (presumed) social pressure on variety-seeking behavior. People made more variety of choices in public than in private even if it required them to choose less-preferred items, which was moderated by individual differences in self-monitoring. It was also found that people believe others to prefer variety more than themselves. Moreover, a tendency to seek more variety in public was attenuated when the social cue that choosing one's favorite is appropriate is given.

Preliminary Study:

- 50 undergraduates, to explore how people expect others to relate favorable/unfavorable traits (e.g. open-minded, boring) to variety-seeking behavior.
- **Result:** Overall, participants listed more favorable traits for a person who seeks variety compared to some who does not ($p < .0001$) and listed more unfavorable traits for a person who does not seek variety compared to someone who does ($p < .0001$)

Study 1:

- 65 students from southeastern and northeastern universities, to test whether participants seek more variety in public than in private consumption context, even though it implies choosing more non-favorite items
- **Hypothesis:** Participants will seek variety more by incorporating more non-favorite items in public (vs. private)
- **Design:** two-cell (public vs. private) between-participants design, participants randomly assigned to a condition
- **Method:** 1) the mean number of types of candy chosen was compared between groups 2) multinomial logit analysis compared how much preference ranking affects the probability of choosing the candy 3) binary logit analysis compared the probability of choosing candy in the bottom box (three less preferred types of candies) in public/private condition
- **Result:** Participants chose significantly fewer types of candy in the private condition than public condition. Preference ranking did not have a significant impact on the probability of choosing for the public condition while it had a significant impact for the private condition (participants were more likely to choose candy that they preferred less). Participants in public conditions had a significantly higher percentage of the choices from the bottom box than in private condition.

Study 2:

- 150 undergraduates, 1) to examine whether people expect that choosing a varied set will make favorable impressions on others and 2) to examine the moderating role of self-monitoring construct
- **Hypothesis:** 1) Participants will seek variety more by incorporating more non-favorite items in public (vs. private) 2) public pressure to appear interesting will induce more

variety-seeking among high self-monitors compared to low self-monitors 3) a desire to appear interesting will induce high self-monitors to choose variety in public more compared to a desire to appear rational

- **Design:** 3 (evaluation condition: private vs. evaluation - interesting vs. evaluation – rational) X 2 (self-monitoring: low vs. high) between-participants design
- **Method:** 1) ANOVA and mean comparison were conducted to test the effects of evaluation condition and self-monitoring on the amount of variety chosen 2) correlation between evaluative dimensions and variety-seeking behaviors was examined 3) the ratings participants gave for (hypothetical) decision to “choose all the same” versus “chose one of each” type of candy were compared
- **Result:** The interaction effect of self-monitoring and evaluation manipulation on the number of different types chosen was significant. High self-monitors showed more variety-seeking in evaluation – interesting condition compared to private condition, while low self-monitors did not show a significant difference. High self-monitors significantly chose more variety than did low self-monitors in evaluation -interesting condition. High self-monitors did not choose more variety in evaluation – rational condition compared to private condition. Low self-monitors chose more variety in evaluation – rational condition compared to private condition (unhypothesized result). High/low self-monitors had similar perceptions of how others would evaluate variety-seeking behavior. How favorable/good/interesting/creative participants thought others would consider their decision was positively correlated to the number of different types chosen significantly. (risk-seeking/innovative/rational - partially significant, sensible - not significant). Participants rated “choose one of each” decision as significantly more innovative/creative/risk-seeking and partially significantly more interesting. For other measures, there were no significant differences (favorable/good/rational/sensible).

Study 3:

- 150 undergraduates, 1) to examine whether individuals expect others to seek more variety than themselves, 2) to test whether a social cue that makes it appear appropriate to choose one’s favorite will attenuate the perceived pressure to choose variety
- **Hypothesis:** 1) Participants will expect others to prefer more variety than themselves 2) a social cue that makes it appear appropriate to choose one’s favorite will alleviate the perceived pressure to choose variety
- **Design:** 2 (observability: private vs. public) X 2 (cue: none vs. present) between-participants design
- **Method:** 1) mean comparison between participants’ own choice variety and ‘typical person’ choice variety (indicated by participants) 2) ANOVA analysis on amount of variety chosen 3) two-way ANOVA analysis controlling for the number of times recommended item was selected
- **Result:** Participants thought that a typical person would choose more variety compared to their own choice. Participants in public – no cue condition reported that amount of variety participants would choose would not differ significantly from that chosen by their peers, while participants in other conditions reported that the former was significantly lower than the latter. The interaction effect of observability and cue on amount of variety chosen was significant. In no-cue condition, participants significantly chose more variety in public (vs. private) but the difference was insignificant when social cue was present. The interaction effect of observability and cue on amount of variety chosen was still significant after controlling for the number of times recommended item was selected.

Discussion Questions

- In week 6 (Social Influence), we looked into divergence as an identity signal, especially to avoid signaling undesired identities. Do you think the findings of this article is somehow related to identity signaling? For instance, the tendency to abandon taste (divergence) varies across domains in identity signaling. Would this apply to variety-seeking as well?
- Can you relate the findings to marketing strategies? For instance, how can marketers leverage the findings for brick-and-mortar retail or e-commerce?
- According to this article, the desire to appear interesting is one of the drivers for variety-seeking. Another behavior that might be associated with being ‘interesting’ is trying new products. Do you think the tendency to try new products will also increase in public (vs. private)? Why or why not?

Paper 3

When choice is demotivating: Can one desire too much of a good thing?

- Iyengar, S. S., & Lepper, M. R. (2000). *Journal of personality and social psychology*.

Youngjun Kim

Summary

People face a lot of situations where they have to make decisions out of multiple choices. The paper examined the notion that the more choice, the better, through three experiments. People were more likely to purchase a product or write a better essay when a limited number of choices were offered. Study 1 and study 2 support the hypothesis that extensive-choice contexts may be initially more appealing but are subsequently more likely to hamper people's intrinsic motivation. Study 3 showed that people enjoy the process of choosing more and feel more responsible when they have more choices, however, they proved to be more dissatisfied and regretful of the choices.

Study 1: Field Experiment (Jams)

- Study 1 examined whether the number of options displayed affected consumers' initial attraction to or subsequent purchase of the displayed product.
- Consumers encountered at a tasting booth in a grocery store. The tasting booth displayed either limited (6) or extensive (24) selection of different flavors of Wilkin & Sons jam (\$4-\$6)
- Results:
 - Initial Attractiveness of Selections: the variety provided in the extensive-choice condition was initially more attractive.
 - Subsequent Purchasing Behavior : Consumers initially exposed to limited choices were more likely to purchase the product.

Study 2: Field Experiment (Essay)

- 197 Students were given the opportunity to write a two-page essay as an extra credit assignment, after watching a movie. They were given either 6 (limited-choice condition) or 30 (extensive-choice condition) potential essay topics.
- Five sections (70 students) were assigned to the limited choice condition, while other five sections (123 students) were assigned to the extensive choice condition.
- Results:
 - 74% of 70 students(limited-choice condition) and 60% of 123 students (extensive-choice condition) completed the assignment.
 - Quality of Essays : Students in the limited-choice condition performed better than those in the extensive-choice condition.

Study 3 : Experiment (Chocolates)

- In study 3, participants initially made a selection from either a limited array (6 different flavors of Godiva chocolates) or an extensive array of chocolates (30 different chocolates). Experimental group sampled the chocolate of their choices, whereas the control group sampled a chosen chocolate.

- There are four dependent measures : participants' initial satisfaction with the choosing process, their expectations of choices, their subsequent satisfaction with the sampled chocolates, and their later purchasing behavior. There are three different groups : limited choice, extensive choice, and no-choice control condition.
- Results:
 - Choosing time : Participants spent significantly more time deciding which chocolate to sample when there were 30 chocolates.
 - Perception of choices : The participants who faced 30 chocolates felt that they had been given “too many”.
 - Satisficing versus optimizing : The results revealed no differences by condition for questions regarding goals of either satisficing or optimizing.
 - Desirability of choosing : Participants with extensive options reported enjoying the decision-making process significantly more, and they found the decision making process more difficult and more frustrating.
 - Subsequent Satisfaction : Participants in the limited choice condition were significantly more satisfied.
 - Purchasing Behavior : Participants in the limited choice condition were more likely to choose chocolates as compensation rather than money.

Discussion Question

- If the consumers in the tasting booth have more than enough time to taste more than two jam flavors, would the order of tasting flavors affect their choice?
- Would the participants still make the same decision, even if they have to pay a lot for their choices? (e.g. laptops, phones, ...)
- BaskinRobbins has a variety of tastes, do you think the company is doing well, considering the results of the paper?

Choice and self-expression: a cultural analysis of variety-seeking.

- Kim, H. S., & Drolet, A., 2003, JPSP

Hyeonju Shin

Summary

People tend to seek variety when they choose things. This variety-seeking tendency is shown based on assumptions that the act of choice is an act of self-expression and that uniqueness is good. Is it universal around the world? What would happen in the context where different assumptions are accepted? The paper demonstrates how different assumptions of choice and uniqueness affect people's variety-seeking tendency by showing that the amount of variety-seeking behaviors differs across cultural contexts. In more collectivist culture, like Korea, different assumptions on uniqueness and choice are shared, that is uniqueness is often considered as defiance against group and choice is more like an interpersonal task rather than the means to express oneself. Consequently, the tendency is less evident than in cultures like the U.S.

Studies

- **Study 1. Cultural Differences in Variety-Seeking**

Method: 2 (*type of background: compromise vs. non-compromise*) × 2 (*culture: US born vs. Korean born*) *between-subject design*. 343 participants (137 were born in the US, 206 in Korea) were randomly assigned to one of 2 conditions: compromise and non-compromise. All were asked to make three choices with first two background choices and then target choice. In compromise condition, background choices were in the category of portable grills and stereo speakers, which were manipulated to favor the middle option out of 3 options. In non-compromise condition, they were dental insurance and ice cream, which made to disfavor the middle option. All made a third choice, the target one, of tickets to the baseball game.

Hypothesis: People from US where uniqueness is good would switch away from rules used on previous choice occasions, whereas people from Korea where uniqueness is not so positive would not show switching effect.

Results: US-born participants in compromise condition chose a compromise option significantly less for target choice (11.9%) than in non-compromise condition (35.7%). Korean-born participants in compromise sets (22.6%) were not significantly less likely to choose a compromise option for target choice than non-compromise sets (23%).

- **Study 2. The Effect of Advertisements that represent either Uniqueness or Relatedness [Priming] on Variety-Seeking in Choice Rule Use**

Method: 2 (*type of background: compromise vs. non-compromise*) × 2 (*priming: uniqueness vs. relatedness*) *between-subject design*. 181 participants, randomly assigned one of 2 conditions – uniqueness priming or relatedness priming condition –, looked at advertisements that each promote either individuality or relationality and asked to fill out a questionnaire on how each ad made them feel. The questionnaire presented a list of emotion words showing both the feeling of uniqueness and relatedness. After that, all participants were asked to make three sets of choices, identical to Study 1.

Hypothesis: People primed by uniqueness would show the switching of choice rules.

Results: Participants primed with uniqueness themes in ads were more likely to choose the compromise option (38.8%) in non-compromise condition than participants in the compromise condition (10.5%). In contrast, participants primed with relatedness themes in ads were not any more likely to choose a compromise option (26.7%) than participant in the compromise condition (31.3%).

- **Study 3. The Effect of a Choice-Listing Task on the Amount of Variety-Seeking in Choice Rule Use**

Method: 2 (type of background: compromise vs. non-compromise) \times 2 (choice-listing task: choice listing vs. no choice listing) between-subjects factorial design. In the first part, 602 US-born participants were randomly assigned to one of 2 conditions: choice-listing or no-choice-listing condition. Choice-listing participants were asked to list all the choices they could recall that morning before the study, while no-choice-listing participants were not asked to recall any. In the second part, all participants were asked to make three sets of choices, identical to Study 1. That is to make three contiguous choices, first two with background sets and then the target set.

Hypothesis: The exercise of recalling and listing choices people made would satisfy the need for self-expression, thus reducing the need for variety-seeking and making people less likely to switch their choice rule.

Results: Among participants in no-choice-listing tasks, people in compromise condition were significantly less likely to choose compromise option (26.5%) than people in non-compromise condition (39%). In contrast, when asked to list choice, participants in the compromise condition were not significantly less likely to choose the compromise option (35.1%) than participants in the non-compromise condition (28.3%). Furthermore, people who listed a relatively small number of choices showed a significant effect of background condition, revealing 23% change in target choice share, compared to participants with large number of choices, revealing 2% change in target choice share.

Discussion Questions

- Our lives are filled with a constant stream of choices. We might not be aware of the fact that we are making a choice even when we make one. Do you agree that simply listing choices that one had in Study 3 can reduce the desire to self-express?
- Can participants who were born in Korea in Study 1 represent the collectivism culture well compared to people who were born in and have lived in Korea? Have you heard or experienced TCK(Third Culture Kids)?
- With the MZ generation (or Gen Z) emerging, Korean society has gone through some changes that are heading towards revealing oneself and respecting individualism. Do you believe the assumptions that are dominant in one society stay stationary? Or do you believe it can be changed over time?

General Questions

- Is the desire being unique more evident in an interpersonal context? When do you feel the desire to be unique or desire to be blended in?
- What is the motivation behind variety-seeking? In article 1 and 3, the independent variables are derived from intrapersonal context, whereas they are from interpersonal context in article 3 and 4. Which context is stronger behind variety-seeking?

- The four researches above explore variety-seeking behavior in terms of (1) time discrepancy between purchase and consumption, (2) the situational context of whether in public or private, (3) the number of options and (4) cultural differences. What else can provide an explanation for variety-seeking behavior?