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Decisions about time in public transport

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Abstract

Travel behavior research shows that the disutility of waiting times looms larger than the disutility of in-vehicle times. However, little has been said about the plausibility of the assumption of compensatory behavior in the preferences for waiting and traveling. Another open question is whether the variability in waiting and in-vehicle times affects transport decisions in the same way. To answer these research questions, we conducted a lab experiment with university students from London, UK and Santiago, Chile. Participants were presented with 14 decisions scenarios that manipulated the average and the variability of waiting and in-vehicle times in two bus routes under the choice paradigms of decisions from description and from experience. We found that participants did not compensate waiting and in-vehicle times; rather, they sought to minimize overall journey times. In addition, participants disliked more variability while waiting than traveling. Interestingly, both behaviors were only observed in the experiential choices.