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Self induced framing as a cognitive strategy for decision-making

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Abstract

Decision frames influence how people act. These frames and the resulting decisions can be changed by manipulating how a problem is described. Here, we ask if people themselves can induce frame changes when thinking about a problem and how these frame changes affect decision-making and choice satisfaction. In our experiment, participants (N > 700) generated as many options as they would like for day to day scenarios as choosing a costume for a party or finding a gift for a friend. Then, participants selected one of the options they generated and reported their choice satisfaction. We found that choice satisfaction was higher when the option selected was more semantically dissimilar to the rest of the option set. We argue that this suggests that participants use a novel strategy to facilitate decision-making: Participants aimed to construct decision frames by generating options sets with a uniquely dissimilar option, which facilitated choice and increased satisfaction.