Supplementary Materials for **“Information search in everyday decisions: The generalizability of the attraction search effect”** – Instructions

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**Instructions for Experiment 1**

**Intro**

Dear participant,

Welcome to this study and thank you for your willingness to participate. This study is part of a Bachelor thesis, which is conducted under supervision of the chair of Experimental Psychology as part of a Psychology major at the University of Mannheim.

This study takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. In the following, you will be working on different decision situations and provide some demographical data.

All participants have the chance to win an Amazon gift card with a value of 15€! Alternatively, students at the University of Mannheim may receive course credit (0.25 h) for the participation.

Finally, I would kindly ask you to answer following questions honestly and thoroughly.

Please click on “continue”.

**Informed Consent**

The guidelines of the University of Mannheim request that every participant of an empirical study give their consent to participation and document that participation is voluntary.

Information about the study

Name of study: “Information search in everyday decisions”

Project supervisor: Prof. Dr. Arndt Bröder

Duration: ca. 10 minutes

Reward: course credit (0.25 h) or participation in lottery for an Amazon gift card

Hereby, I declare that I participate voluntarily in the above mentioned study. I was assured that no physical or psychological harm or pain may result from partaking in this study. I am aware that I am free at any time to discontinue my participation. After aborting the study, I lose my claims regarding course credit or payment of financial rewards.

I am also aware that all information I was provided with during this study must be treated confidentially and must not be shared with other potential participants. I was assured full anonymity. The data of this study will be saved and stored in such way that no connections can be drawn to me as an individual. At the end of this study, I have the right to learn the background, the purpose of the data, and its results. I am aware that I have to assert this claim by explicitly asking for the corresponding information.

Anytime during participation and shortly after I may request deletion of my data. I was assured that this request will be granted. No reason has to be given for this request to be fulfilled. If my data is deleted at my request, I lose all claims for course credit and payment of financial rewards.

In return I assure that I will complete all task with complete seriousness. I am aware that my participation contributes to research. Good quality in research can only be guaranteed if instructions are taken note of, no unallowed devices are used, and the task are completed with due diligence.

Please, indicate if you agree with all the above.

(If you do not agree, the study will end for you on the next page)

* Yes
* No

**Socio-demographic Questions**

Please indicate your gender?

* male
* female

How old are you? (in years)

What is your highest educational attainment?

* high school student,
* finished school without degree
* Hauptschulabschluss (degree with 4 years of secondary school)
* Realschulabschluss (degree with 5 years of secondary school)
* Fachhochschulreife (degree with 8-9 years of secondary school, acceptance at universities of applied sciences)
* Abitur (degree with 8-9 years of secondary school, full acceptance at universities)

What is your current job? (Please provide your main vocation)

* college student
* high school student
* in apprenticeship
* employee
* government official
* freelancer
* unemployed/seeking employment
* in retirement
* other (please specify)

Please indicate your language abilities in German

* mother tongue
* very good abilities
* good abilities
* basic knowledge

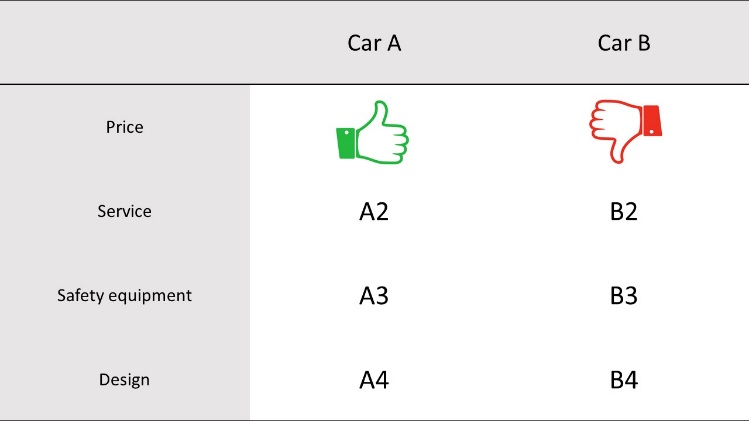
**Task Instructions**

On the following pages you are faced with different scenarios, in which you must decide for one option. Before making your decision, you can receive an additional piece of information. To gain a better understanding of the upcoming decisions and how they will proceed, you will be provided with an example.

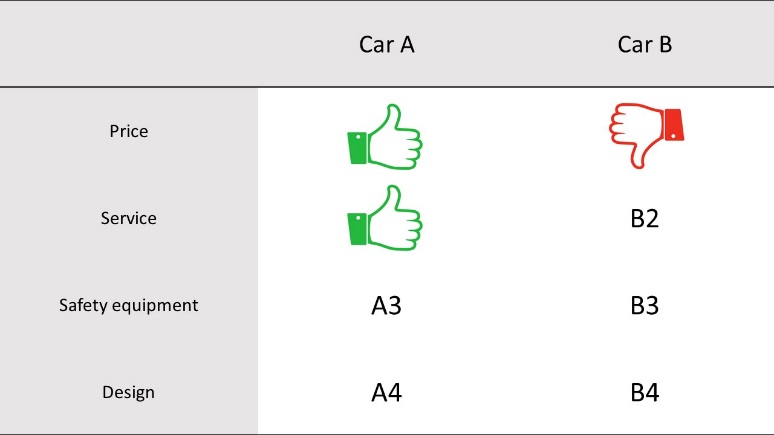
Imagine you are about to purchase a new car. You have already informed yourself about potential options and after weighing the pros and cons you end up with two cars – Car A and Car B – in your final selection. For your final decision you have set four criteria: price, service, equipment with safety systems and design.

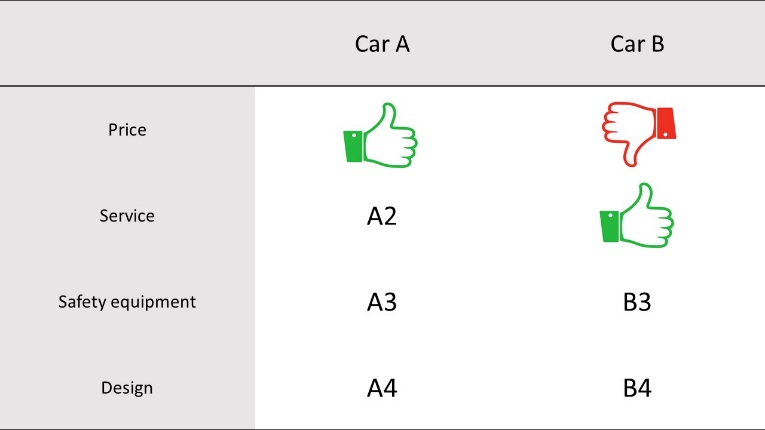
If one criterion is good/available for this car, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad/unavailable for this car, a red thumbs-down is displayed (see “evaluation of the car”). Since you are only provided with partial information, you can inspect one additional piece of information.

The display below shows which information is already available and which extra information you may choose to guide your decision. The letter A and B indicate whether the information pertains to Car A or Car B, and the numbers from 1 to 4 indicate the type of information (descending by rows).



Depending on which information you chose, the added information will appear in the corresponding table on the next page.

If, for example, you chose Information A2, following table would be displayed.

However, if you choose information B2, following table would be displayed.

Lastly, it is your task to choose one of the options – A or B.

In the following scenarios, you can always choose between two options and there will always be four criteria. Which information and how much of it is shown, differs between scenarios. The type of decision – evaluating options or deciding between options – also differs between scenarios. For this reason, please, read all instructions thoroughly, and do not click on “continue” until you know which type of decision has to be made.

If you have not understood the procedure, please, reread the example above. If you have understood everything, please, click on “continue” to begin with the first scenario.

**Hotel Scenario**

You are planning your summer vacation to finally relax for a bit. You have already decided on your destination; however, you are still looking to find the right hotel. Following criteria are important to you: distance to the beach, price, distance to the city center, cleanliness

In the following, you can decide between two hotels – Hotel A and Hotel B. Some information with regard to your criteria is already available. Here, two stars denote a bad rating, and 5 stars a good one. Before deciding, you may search for another piece of information. After that you must decide for one of the hotels.

Please choose the piece of information you would like to inspect. *(Repeated for every scenario)*

Please, decide for one of the options. *(Repeated for every scenario)*

**Hair Salon Scenario**

You have moved to a new city and you are now looking for a new hair salon. Until now you have information on the competence, the price, the proximity, and the ease to make an appointment of two hair salons – Salon A and Salon B.

Here, five hair brushes denote a good evaluation and one hair brush a bad one. As you do not have access to all available information yet, you may search for another piece of information before deciding. After that you must decide for one of the salons.

**Pizza Service Scenario**

Today, you are having friends over and you are planning to order pizza. You are considering two pizza places – Pizzeria A or Pizzeria B. You have partial information regarding quality, price, punctuality and friendliness of these two pizza places. Two stars denote a bad rating, and five stars a good one.

As you do not have all the information you need, on the next page you will have the opportunity to obtain further information before making your decision. Afterwards you have to decide for one of the two pizza places.

**City Size Scenario**

Below you will find two cities - City A and City B - which differ in size. Your task is to judge which city is larger. For this you have information on four criteria: state capital, international airport, university and theater/opera.

Via the buttons, "Yes" and "No", you are informed whether the criteria apply to the respective city or not. As you do not have all the information you need, on the next page you will have the opportunity to obtain further information before making your decision. Afterwards you will decide which of the two cities is larger.

**Weather Scenario**

On the weekend you and your family plan to do a trip for one day to a town in the surrounding area. Since you want to be outdoors a lot to explore the city better, good weather is important to you. Four sources – German Weather Service , ZDF (a public German TV station) weather, BILD (a German boulevard newspaper) weather and horoscopes - provide you with the weather forecast for the coming weekend in the two preferred cities - City A and City B. Good weather is denoted here with a sun and bad weather with a rain cloud.

You have to choose a city today to get the lowest possible fare. Since not all information is available to you, on the next page you will have the opportunity to find out further information before you have to decide on a city.

**Job Scenario**

In the past few weeks you have had several job interviews and received call backs from two companies. You are now faced with the difficult decision of which contract to sign. The following criteria will help you in your decision: salary, working conditions, friendliness of colleagues and proximity to the workplace.

On the following page you will find information on the two job options - Job A and Job B - in relation to these criteria. If a criterion is good or applies, a green thumb up is presented. If a criterion is bad or does not match, a red thumbs-down will be displayed. However, some of the information is not yet visible. Before you have to decide for a job, you have the possibility of obtaining further information on the following page.

**Subjective Importance Ratings**

How important were these dimensions for your decision between the two hotels?

(Please indicate the importance with value between 0 – 100) *(Repeated for every question)*

* Proximity to the beach
* Price
* Proximity to the city center
* Cleanliness

How important were these dimensions for your decision between the two pizza places?

* Quality
* Price
* Punctuality
* Friendliness

How important were these dimensions for your decision which of two cities is larger?

* State capital
* International airport
* University
* Theater/opera

How important were these dimensions for your decision between the two jobs?

* Salary
* Working conditions
* Friendliness of colleagues
* Proximity to the workplace.

How important were these sources for your decision on which city to visit for your day trip?

* German Weather Service
* ZDF (a public German TV station) weather
* BILD (a German boulevard newspaper) weather
* Horoscopes

How important were these dimensions for your decision between the two hair salons?

* Competence
* Price
* Proximity to home
* Ease to make an appointment

**End & Debriefing**

The study is almost over! First, we would like to thank you for your participation. You may now choose between receiving course credit or participation in a lottery for an Amazon gift card. Please, click the corresponding box, you will be redirected to the corresponding website.

Attention: Your personal information you enter on the following pages is stored independently from your data collected in this study, such that no conclusions can be drawn with regard to your behavior in this study.

[Click corresponding box:]

* course credit
* participation in lottery for Amazon gift card
* I do not want to receive course credit or participate in a lottery.

The study is now over. Thank you for your participation. You may close this window now.

A bit of information about this study: (Please, treat this information confidentially, so that potential participants will not be biased.)

This study was about finding out how information search occurs when making a decision. The Attraction Search Effect predict that individuals will search for further information about the preferred (more attractive) option, since this option has a higher level of activation. This was confirmed in prior studies. This study aims to investigate and replicate the effect in everyday and more practical contexts.

**Instructions for Experiment 2**

**Intro**

Dear participant,

Welcome to this study and thank you for your willingness to participate. This study is conducted in the context of a PhD in Psychology at the chair of Experimental Psychology at the University of Mannheim.

This study takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. In the following, you will be working on different decision situations and provide some demographical data.

All participants, who complete the study seriously, have the chance to win one of 10 Amazon gift cards with a value of 10€! Alternatively, students at the University of Mannheim may receive course credit (0.25 h) for the participation.

Finally, I would kindly ask you to answer the following questions honestly and thoroughly.

Please click on “continue”.

**Informed Consent**

The guidelines of the University of Mannheim request that every participant of an empirical study give their consent to participation and documents that participation is voluntary.

Information about the study

Name of study: “Information search in everyday decisions”

Project supervisor: Sophie Scharf, M.Sc. Psychology

Duration: ca. 15-20 minutes

Reward: course credit (0.25 h) or participation in lottery for one of 10 Amazon gift card with a value of 10€

Hereby, I declare that I participate voluntarily in the above mentioned study. I was assured that no physical or psychological harm or pain may result from partaking in this study. I am aware that I am free at any time to discontinue my participation. After aborting the study, I lose my claims regarding course credit or payment of financial rewards.

I am also aware that all information I was provided with during this study must be treated confidentially and must not be shared with other potential participants. I was assured full anonymity. The data of this study will be saved and stored in such way that no connections can be drawn to me as an individual. At the end of this study, I have the right to learn the background, the purpose of the data, and its results. I am aware that I have to assert this claim by explicitly asking for the corresponding information.

Anytime during participation and shortly after I may request deletion of my data. I was assured that this request will be granted. No reason has to be given for this request to be fulfilled. If my data is deleted at my request, I lose all claims for course credit and payment of financial rewards.

In return I assure that I will complete all task with complete seriousness. I am aware that my participation contributes to research. Good quality in research can only be guaranteed if instructions are taken note of, no external devices are used, and the task are completed with due diligence.

Please, indicate if you agree with all the above.

(If you do not agree, the study will end for you on the next page)

* Yes
* No

Please click on "continue".

**Task Instructions**

Now the part of the study starts in which you have to deal with different decision situations. Therefore, you will receive detailed instructions as well as an example of the task. For this reason, please read the following instructions thoroughly.

On the following pages, you are faced with different scenarios, in which you must decide between two options. Your task is it to choose the better/matching option regarding specific criteria.

To be able to make the decision, you receive information about each option. The amount of information you can request in every scenario, is restricted from 3 to 7 additional pieces of information.

The amount of information that you are able to receive in every scenario is determined randomly and will be communicated after you have asked for all the available information.

Which information you search for, is up to you.

For your participation, you have the chance to win one of 10 Amazon gift cards with a value of 10€. Only the participants who complete the task with complete seriousness will be considered in the lottery. If the task is not completed conscientiously, participants will be excluded from the lottery.

On the next page, you will receive an overview of the structure of the decision scenarios.

The following picture shows a typical decision situation. Your task is to choose between the two cars regarding the given characteristics. If one criterion is good/available for this car, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad/unavailable for this car, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

You can request information by clicking on the blank fields in the table. Each field of the table informs you about the positive or negative value for the option.

In each task, you are able to request between 3 and 7 pieces of information regarding the two options without knowing the exact number of information you can receive. If you have chosen all the information you can get, you will be asked for make a decision now. However, you never have to request all the information.

As soon as you have received all the information that you can and want to receive, you can choose between the two options by clicking on the box that is labeled with the name of the chosen option.

Before starting with an example, here is a short test to ensure that you understood everything correctly:

How do you get information?

* By clicking on the blank fields in the table.
* By clicking on the fields in the table, where the features are presented.

How much information can you get at maximum? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you able to uncover the same amount of information in every decision situation?

* Yes
* No

Perfect! You have understood all the instructions. Please start now with the first example scenario to make yourself familiar with the concrete structure of the task.

**Example Scenario**

Imagine you are writing an article for a car magazine. Your task is it to choose the car that will be elected as the reader's favorite of this edition. You already got a recommendation with a preselection of two cars - Car A and Car B.

For your final decision you have set four criteria: price, motor power, equipment with safety systems and design. Since you do not have any information regarding these criteria yet, you are now able to request some information first. If one criterion is good/available for this car, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad/unavailable for this car, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

You do not have any information regarding the two cars yet but you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards you have to decide between the two cars.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You have now received all instructions and can start with the decision tasks.

Please click on "continue".

**Hair Salon Scenario**

You have to nominate the best hair salon in your city. Therefore, you have to choose between to hair salons - Salon A and Salon B - the one which most of the residents in your city would favor.

You can request information about the competence, the price, the proximity to the center, and the ease to make an appointment of two hair salons. Here, five hair brushes denote a good evaluation and two hair brushes a bad one.

As you do not have any information yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide which of the salons is the better one.

**Computer Scenario**

A friend of yours wants to buy a computer. He asks you for a recommendation, which one of the two computers - Computer A and Computer B - he shall buy. You are supposed to recommend him the computer which most people would recommend.

You support your recommendation with the price, the speed, the design and the audibility of the computer. Here, five stars denote a good evaluation and two stars a bad one.

As you do not have any information yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide which of the computers most of the people would recommend.

**Gym Scenario**

You are planning to conclude a membership in a gym with a group of friends to exercise together. Your task is it to choose the gym which is a good choice for all of your friends. You have already made a preselection and now have to decide between to gyms - Gym A and Gym B.

You make the decision based on the monthly fees, the range of the courses offered, the sports equipment and the opening hours. Here, five dumbbells denote a good evaluation and two dumbbells a bad one.

As you do not have any information yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide between the two gyms.

**Hotel Scenario**

You are planning the summer trip for a huge group of travelers. The destination is already set but you still have to find the appropriate hotel. You have to choose the hotel that most of the participants would book. Therefore, the important criteria are: the proximity to the beach, the price, the proximity to the center and the cleanliness. In the following you have the option between two hotels - Hotel A and Hotel B. As you do not have any information yet, you can request some information first. Here, five stars denote a good evaluation and two stars a bad one.

Before you have to make your decision, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide for one hotel.

**Cell Contract Scenario**

In a test of cell service contracts you have to elect a test winner. Therefore, it is important that you choose the contract which would be the best choice for most of the people. Your selection is restricted to two different contracts - Contract A and Contract B.

You make the decision regarding the costs, the network coverage, the amount of free minutes and the data volume. Here, five stars denote a good or positive evaluation and two stars a bad or negative one.

As you do not have any information yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide which one you elect as the test winner.

**Job Scenario**

A friend of yours had several job interviews and got a positive feedback from two companies. Now you are supposed to help him with the decision and have to recommend the job, which most people would recommend.

You support your recommendation with the following criteria: the payment, the work conditions, colleagues’ friendliness and the proximity to home. You do not have any information about the job offers - Job A and Job B - yet.

If one criterion is good for the job, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad for the job, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

On the following page, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information regarding the two job offers. Afterwards you have to decide which job you want to recommend.

**Granola Scenario**

For a breakfast buffet you have to choose between two granolas - Granola A and Granola B. You want to choose the kind of granola that is rated as healthy by most of the people.

Therefore, your criteria are: the percentage of dietary fiber, the amount of calories, the percentage of organic ingredients and the percentage of fair-trade ingredients. If one criterion is good/available for this car, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad/unavailable for this granola, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

As you do not have any information regarding the two granolas yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide between the two granolas.

**Apartment Scenario**

Imagine you are a real estate agent and have to decide which apartment - Apartment A and Apartment B - you want to include into your portfolio. Therefore, it is important that the apartment is appealing for as many people as possible.

You take four criteria into your consideration: the proximity to the center, the luminosity of the apartment, the square footage and the neighbors’ friendliness. If one criterion is good/positive for the apartment, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is bad/negative for the apartment, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

As you do not have any information regarding the characteristics of the two apartments yet, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information on the following page. Afterwards, you must decide between the two apartments.

**City Size Scenario**

In the following, two cities will be presented to you - City A and City B - which differ in their size. Your task is to judge which city is larger.

For this purpose, you can receive information about four criteria: state capital, international airport, university and theater/opera.

Via the buttons, "Yes" and "No", you are informed whether the criteria apply to the respective city or not. As you do not have all the information you need, on the next page you will have the opportunity to obtain further information (between 3 and 7 pieces) before making your decision. Afterwards you will decide which of the two cities is larger.

**Insurance Scenario**

For a newspaper article, you have to choose an insurance which you can recommend to your readers. Therefore, it is important that you choose the insurance, which would be the best option for most of the people. Your selection is already restricted to two insurances - Insurance A and Insurance B.

The relevant criteria for your decision are: the cost coverage, the monthly payment, the availability in case of damage, the staff's kindness. If one criterion is evaluated well, a green thumbs-up is displayed. However, if one criterion is evaluated badly, a red thumbs-down is displayed.

On the following page, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information. Afterwards, you must decide for one of the insurances.

**Weather Scenario**

You are planning a day trip in a city in the surrounding area with a group of adolescents that you supervise. Since you want to explore the city, you will spend a lot of time outside and, therefore, you need good weather. For the weather forecast for the coming weekend, you have four different sources: the German Weather Service, the weather of German public news (zdf), the weather of German private news (Bild) and a horoscope. You can choose between City A and City B. Good weather is displayed with a sun and bad weather is displayed with a rain cloud.

To receive a fair price for the ride, you already have to decide between the two cities today. It is important that you choose the city which most of the people would choose based on the weather forecast. As you do not have all the information you need, on the next page you will have the opportunity to obtain further information (between 3 and 7 pieces) before making your decision. Afterwards you have to decide between the two cities.

**Pizza Service Scenario**

Today, you are having friends over and you are planning to order pizza. You are considering two pizza places – Pizzeria A or Pizzeria B. Your task is it to choose the pizza place which most of your friends would choose as well.

You want to take your decision regarding quality of the pizza, price of the pizza, punctuality and friendliness of these two pizza places. As you do not have any information yet, you are now able to request some information first. Two stars denote a bad rating, and five stars a good one.

Before you make your decision, you can request between 3 and 7 pieces of information. Afterwards, you must decide for one of the pizzerias.

**Recognition Task Instructions**

In the following, you will find some questions concerning the tasks you have just completed. Please answer these questions, taking into account if you have just made a decision about these topics in the decision task. You can either answer with a "yes", if you have made a decision concerning this topic, or with a "no" if you have not made a decision about this topic in the task you worked on before. As soon as you have answered all the questions, please click on "continue".

In the task that you just completed, have you made a decision about...

* ... a computer?
* ... coffee? *(distractor)*
* ...a doctor? *(distractor)*
* ...a sports bet? *(distractor)*
* ...a bank for an account opening? *(distractor)*
* ...a hotel?
* ...an apartment?
* ...a festival? *(distractor)*
* ...a mobile phone contract?
* ... a fitness center?
* ... the size of a city?
* ...a bicycle? *(distractor)*

**Socio-Demographic Questions**

In the following, I would like you to answer a few questions. Afterwards, please click on "continue".

Which gender do you have?

* female
* male
* other

How old are you? (in years)

What is your highest educational attainment?

* high school student,
* finished school without degree
* Hauptschulabschluss (degree with 4 years of secondary school)
* Realschulabschluss (degree with 5 years of secondary school)
* Fachhochschulreife (degree with 8-9 years of secondary school, acceptance at universities of applied sciences)
* Abitur (degree with 8-9 years of secondary school, full acceptance at universities)

What is your current job? (Please provide your main vocation)

* College student
* high school student
* in apprenticeship
* employee
* government official
* freelancer
* unemployed/seeking employment
* in retirement
* other (please specify)

Please indicate your language abilities in German

* mother tongue
* very good abilities
* good abilities
* basic knowledge

**End & Debriefing**

The study is almost over!

First of all, we would like to thank you for your participation.

You may now choose between receiving course credit or participation in a lottery for an Amazon gift card. Please, click the corresponding box, you will be redirected to the corresponding website.

Attention: Your personal information you enter on the following pages is stored independently from your data collected in this study, such that no conclusions can be drawn regarding your behavior in this study.

[Click corresponding box:]

* course credit
* participation in lottery for Amazon gift card
* I do not want to receive course credit or participate in a lottery.

Now the study is really over!

Thank you for your participation. You may close this window now.

A bit of information about this study: (Please, treat this information confidentially, so that potential participants will not be biased.)

This study was about finding out, how information search occurs when making a decision.

The aim was to examine, in how the opened information influences the subsequent information search. Moreover, the study investigates the influence of already uncovered information in a relevant and practical context for everyday life.

**Instructions for Experiment 3**

**Intro**

Welcome to the Study on Decision Making!

Thank you for participating in this study. The following study is part of a research project by the Experimental Psychology Lab at the University of Mannheim in Germany. In this study, we will ask you to imagine being a buyer for an online shop and having to decide between articles of clothing. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and you may cease participation at any time without any adverse consequences.

However, in order to obtain useful data for our project, we kindly ask you to stay with us until the end. Participating in the study will take about 10 minutes.

Please make sure that you take part via a laptop or computer to ensure optimal resolution.

Please click on "Next" to continue.

**Informed Consent**

Study: Study on Decision Making

Person responsible: Sophie Scharf, M. Sc. Psychology

By checking “yes” at the end of this page, I confirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I participate in this study voluntarily. I was informed that participating in this study will take about 12 minutes. For my participation, I will receive a financial reimbursement of 1.10 $. I was assured that no physical or emotional pain or risks can occur as a consequence of participation in this study.

Further, I was assured that during the study, I will not be purposefully deceived, I will not receive any false feedback, and I will not be made to believe false facts. It is, however, possible, that certain pieces of information (e.g., requirements of following tasks, performance or earnings feedback) will be held back for the moment; this information will be fully disclosed as soon as possible (at the end of the study at the latest). If I should feel deceived or misinformed during this study, I may cease participation at any time without any adverse consequences and contact the person responsible for this study.

I am also aware that I may cease participation at any time without giving reason or prior notice, and without any adverse consequences. When ceasing participation, I may lose my right to reimbursement. All data is recorded and analyzed in pseudonymized form, by using a unique numerical, system generated user ID and/or a personal code that I generated during the study and only I know. I am aware that all recorded data and personal communication in the course of this study will be treated confidentially. All staff that is in contact with personal information from this study through me are bound by rules of professional secrecy.

After completing the study, I will be informed about the background and aim of the study. If I am interested in further information, I can contact the person responsible after completing the study.

I agree to further use and processing of my pseudonymized data for research purposes. I am aware that the collected data will be stored for at least ten years. At every point in time, during and after my participation in this study, I can request that my data will be deleted without giving reasons. This request can only be complied with, if I generated a personal code. I can request the deletion of my data by only stating my personal code and without stating my name or any other personal information.

I am aware that all information and all acquired knowledge about the content and the course of this study are confidential and must not be shared with other potential participants.

If I have any questions or other concerns, I can contact the following person:

Sophie E. Scharf, M.Sc. Psychology

Experimental Psychology Lab, School of Social Sciences, University of Mannheim

L13, 17

D-68161 Mannheim, Germany

Office: L13, 17, room 507

-fon Scharf: +49 (0)621 181 3389

[sophie.scharf@gess.uni-mannheim.de](mailto:sophie.scharf@gess.uni-mannheim.de)

Click on “yes” to indicate that you have read this form and understand the information above. By clicking on the "yes" radio button, you acknowledge that you have been informed of, and understand the nature and purpose of this study, and you freely consent to participate. If you click on "no", you will terminate this study.

* Yes
* No

**Individual Code**

Generating an individual code

One important challenge of social sciences research is on the one hand to ensure that all collected data can be deleted on request of a participant and on the other hand to ensure the anonymityof participants.

To achieve both goals, you create an anonymous, personal code that will be saved with the data. This way, all collected data is pseudonymized allowing us to save a unique identifier with the data that does not allow any conclusions about the individual who created the code

The advantage of this method is that you can generate this code again at any time. This way you can request the deletion of your data by giving your code without compromising your anonymity.

For these reasons, it is very important that you generate the code correctly.

Please generate the code now below.

If you do not know one of the pieces of information asked below, please insert "na" or "00".

First name of your mother, second to last and last letter.

First name of your father, first and second letter.

Day (of the month) of your date of birth.

Place of birth, second and third letter.

Name of last attended school (i.e. high school), first and second letter.

Number of older siblings.

**Task Instructions**

Imagine that you are working as a buyer at an online clothing shop. Your job is to buy the articles of clothing to restock the warehouse.

For this purpose, you have to compare similar items of clothing from different brands based on customer ratings, for example two white shirts from different brands. Your job is to choose the best possible item of clothing that should be offered in the online shop you work for.

For each item, different characteristics are available to help you with your decision. For your choice between the brands, some characteristics are more important than others. The specific characteristics are introduced in the following list, ranked by their relevance for your decision.

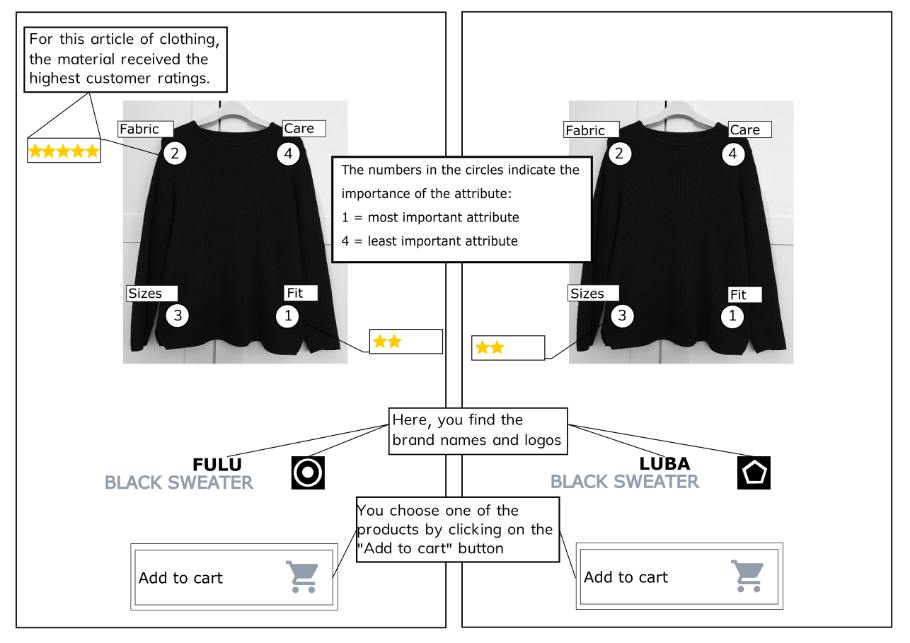
1. Fit: How well does the article of clothing fit? The fit of the clothes is the most important characteristic for your decision, as most returns are due to a bad fit of the clothes. You should, therefore, pay attention to the customer ratings of the fit of the article of clothing.
2. Fabric: How does the fabric feel on the skin? After the fit, this is the most important characteristic. No one keeps clothes that feel itchy or feel uncomfortable.
3. Availability of sizes: How many different sizes are available? If the article of clothing is only available in a small range of different sizes, it is less likely to be ordered and more often returned than an article of clothing that is available in a large range of sizes.
4. Ease of care: Is the article of clothing easy to care for? For potential customers, it is important whether they can put the clothes into the washer and dryer or whether the clothes need to be dry cleaned.

Customers rated these characteristics of each article of clothing by giving them stars. The worst possible rating is two stars, the best possible rating is five stars.

Your task is now to choose between two articles of clothing based on the before mentioned characteristics. You can see an example picture of your task on the bottom of this page.

In the following, you will be presented with two articles of clothing. Some information on the customer ratings of the relevant characteristics will already be available. You can obtain more information by clicking on the circle of one of the characteristics.

After you chose one of the articles of clothing, you can click on the “Add to cart” button underneath the corresponding item. As a memory aid, the characteristics are enumerated in order of their importance: “1” is the most important characteristic, “4” the least important one.

You can already see some information on the customer ratings from the start. You can obtain one more piece of information before each decision by clicking on the respective attribute. 

On the next page, you can work on an example task.

**Instruction Check**

As the quality of the clothes is very important for the online shop you work for, it is very important that you buy the best possible product. Thus, please think about your decisions carefully!

Before you continue, please answer a few questions about the upcoming task:

Can you obtain every piece of information on the articles of clothing?

* Yes
* No

Which characteristic of the articles of clothing is the most important one for your decision?

* Fit
* Ease of care

Is it important for you to choose the best possible article of clothing?

* Yes
* No

[If one question was answered incorrectly:

Unfortunately, you answered one or more questions incorrectly. Here is a reminder:

The criteria for your decision are costumer ratings on four different characteristics of the articles of clothing. Some of these characteristics are more important for your decision than others (the following characteristics are ordered by their importance, beginning with the most important one):

1. Fit
2. Fabric
3. Availability of sizes
4. Ease of care

You can see some of the costumer ratings on these characteristics immediately. For every choice, you can obtain one additional piece of information.

It is important for you to choose the best possible article of clothing for your online shop to remain competitive.

Please answer the questions about the instructions now one more time.]

Now you can begin to buy the 18 remaining articles of clothing that are still missing in your online shop.

**Socio-demographic Questions**

We now ask you to answer a few questions about yourself.

Gender:

* Female
* Male
* Other

Age (in years):

Your (current) highest level of education:

* Less than a high school dimploma
* High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
* Some college, no degree
* Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)
* Bachelor’s degree (e.g. BA, BS)
* Master’s degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
* Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)
* Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)

Current employment status:

* Employed full time (40 or more hours per week)
* Employed part time (up to 39 hours per week)
* Unemployed and currently looking for work
* Unemployed and not currently looking for work
* Student
* Retired
* Homemaker
* Self-employed
* Unable to work

English language skill:

* Native speaker
* Very high
* High
* Intermediate
* Low
* Very low

**Debriefing**

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the already available information and the presentation of this information influences the subsequent information search behavior. We further want to test whether people tend to search for information on the currently preferred option, in this case article of clothing.

Please do not share any information about the background of the study, the study itself, and the purpose of this study with other potential participants.

If you have any further questions, please contact the responsible person for this study.

Thank you again for participating in this study.