

RETAIL ASSORTMENT SIZE AND CUSTOMER CHOICE OVERLOAD: THE INFLUENCE OF SHOPPING ENJOYMENT AND TIME PRESSURE

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ABSTRACT

Despite space limitations and inventory costs, retailers frequently increase product assortments to attract more customers. However, there is an ongoing debate in the literature and in the retailing industry about whether “more is better” or “less is better” in terms of product assortments. Given that understanding customers’ perceptions and preferences about product assortments is complex and challenging (Grewal and Levy 2007; Mantrala et al. 2009), this study addresses a gap in the literature by examining situational and individual factors that may moderate the choice overload effect. Shopping enjoyment and time pressure are assessed as potential moderating variables of the relationship between product assortment size and customer choice overload. An experimental research design is used to survey 164 participants about their affective responses (i.e., feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, confused, and regretful when dealing with a purchase) to either a large assortment (24 items) or a small assortment (4 items). ANCOVA analyses are performed on the data. The results show that, as product assortment increases, choice overload is more common among customers (1) who enjoy shopping less and (2) who are under time pressure. The findings may be helpful for retailers in understanding the characteristics of their customers and designing product assortments to offer better shopping experiences.

References Available Upon Request