VARIETY PROMOTES FLEXIBILITY: THE EFFECT OF EXPOSURE TO HIGH VARIETY ON NEW PRODUCT EVALUATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Variety is an important attribute that impacts consumer preferences in the marketplace. This research contributes to the literature by examining the subtle effect of exposure to high variety on consumer evaluations of unrelated new products. Specifically, I propose that the exposure to high variety induces cognitive flexibility, which in turn leads to more favorable evaluations for new products. Five studies demonstrate the effect of exposure to high variety on cognitive flexibility and new-product evaluations. I also demonstrate that the mechanism underlying the effect is through the increased cognitive flexibility in Study 3. Studies 3 and 4 investigate boundary conditions that the exposure to high variety does not influence new product evaluations when the evaluation contexts do not require cognitive flexibility.

Reference available upon request