



Cue-recognition effects in the assessment of movie trailers[☆]



Matthias Sauer^{*}

University of Klagenfurt, Department of Psychology, Cognitive Psychology Unit (CPU), Universitätsstraße 65–67, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 October 2013

Received in revised form

5 December 2013

Accepted 28 December 2013

Available online 21 January 2014

Keywords:

Assessment

Cue

Heuristic

Preference

Recognition heuristic

ABSTRACT

In the past, the role of recognition in inferential choice has often been investigated within the recognition heuristic (RH) that focuses on the recognition of options. In the present study I investigate instead whether the recognition of a cue influences the assessment of movie trailers. This extension of the RH to cues provides important and more comprehensive insights into recognition in everyday decision-making. One hundred and eighty-eight participants were randomly assigned to one paired comparison and had to decide which of two movie trailers (*Epic* and *The Croods*) was about to become more successful. All pairwise comparisons consisted of the same two unknown animated movie trailers. They differed merely from a fade-in of a short unknown or known movie title (e.g., “From the makers of *Ice Age*”). The central objective of this study was to test whether or not the participants judged movie trailers to be more successful and likeable when associated with the famous movie title and thus decide on the basis of the recognition of this cue. In fact, it was shown that people in this context often revert to this recognition cue. However, the prerequisite for this effect was that the faded-in title should be appropriate for the trailer. Furthermore the preference of animated films was identified as a key factor. Volunteers who liked animated films less, often decided due to the recognized cue. Moreover it is shown that participants increasingly use the recognized cue to decide if they specify a preference and high success for this faded-in movie.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

It is evident that humans prevalently simplify everyday decisions and judgments. Owing to time pressure, restricted information and limited cognitive processing capacity we often fall back on heuristic decisions (see Gigerenzer and Goldstein (1996) and Pachur and Hertwig (2006)). Furthermore Gigerenzer (2004) mentions that people particularly use heuristics due to their robustness and ecological rationality. This realization is a fundamental precondition for the proper understanding of human being's real-life decision-making. Some heuristics make use of our highly developed visual sense and the associated ability of recognition. Several investigators have actually found that people apply this well evolved ability of recognition to simplify decision-making (e.g., Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002) and Schooler and Hertwig (2005)). At this point I would like to specifically refer to the issue of the recognition heuristic. Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002, p. 76) give the following definition of the recognition heuristic: “If one of two objects is recognized and the other not, then infer that the recognized object has the higher value with respect to the criterion”. A classic example is the study of

Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002) which demonstrates the recognition heuristic well. The scientists asked American and German students which of the two cities was more populated, San Antonio or San Diego. The two cities are located in the United States; thus, it was not surprising that 62% of the American students gave the correct answer. More surprising was the answers of the German students. 100% gave the correct answer. Americans were familiar with both cities, but could not apply the recognition heuristic. Despite less knowledge all of the German students managed to answer the question correctly, simply because they just recognized one of the two locations and therefore could apply the heuristic. If there is a positive correlation (recognition validity) between recognition and criterion, the use of the recognition heuristic is considered useful and ecologically rational (see Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002)). Obviously there is a correlation between the number of inhabitants and recognition. The application of this strategy (recognition heuristic) to this environment is consequently ecologically rational. The recognition heuristic can be considered as a noncompensatory decision mechanism because it just relies on a single cue: the recognition. Indeed this could be confirmed by further results of Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002). In one study the authors found that very useful additional information about the unknown town (e.g. soccer club in the Bundesliga) did not lead to a frequent selection of this unknown town; moreover this cue (information) was ignored. On the other hand, for instance, Oeusoonthornwattana and Shanks (2010)

[☆] Special thanks to Bartosz Gula for his comments on an earlier version of this manuscript.

^{*} Tel.: +43 463 2700 1620, +49 7123 72755.

E-mail addresses: matthiasfriedrichsauer@gmx.de, matthias.sauer@aau.at

showed that further information (beyond recognition) is influential. The researchers were able to demonstrate that additional information about the known brand influenced the inferential choice extensively. Furthermore many studies indicated that besides recognition other cues can have a decisive influence on inferential choices (Oppenheimer, 2003; Bröder and Eichler, 2006; Richter and Späth, 2006; Oeusoonthornwattana and Shanks, 2010). Marewski et al. (2011) give an excellent overview and comment on this strongly debated issue outlined above. I will refer to these commentaries during this study in order to gain further knowledge about this issue.

In the past, research focused on the recognition of options. To view the issue of recognition in everyday decision-making from a different perspective, the present study focuses on recognition of a cue with special regard to (1) the recognition of a cue together with other visual information (e.g. story of a trailer) and (2) mere recognition vs. recognition and further knowledge. In order to investigate this question in a real-life choice situation I decided to focus on the assessment of movie trailers. The idea was also to work with a paired comparison as it is commonly used to test the recognition heuristic. Both objects (movie trailers) in the paired comparison used for the current investigation were absolutely unknown; however, one of them included a well-known movie title and the other an unknown. As mentioned above, recognized objects will be chosen over unrecognized ones; hence the current investigation expands previous studies by asking if this is also true for recognized and unrecognized cues (a cue-recognition effect) and when do people resort to recognition.

Scientific findings of priming (e.g. Solso and Short (1979)) and image transfer are important for the current investigation because participants were confronted with a linkage of an unknown (object) and well-known (cue) product – more on this later. Two effects of priming can be distinguished: assimilation and contrast (e.g. Schwarz and Bless (1992)). Contrast creates discrimination between the target and context stimulus. Martin et al. (1990) were able to show that contrast demands more cognitive effort than assimilation. Contrast can be expected only if there exists a specific reason for separation. According to Felser (2007) attempts are made to produce assimilation by connecting a new product on the market as a brand extension or product line extension with existing products, rather than to create a new brand. Prerequisite is that the consumer categorizes the products or brands equally. If so, there occurs an assimilation effect and an image transfer or a so-called spillover effect which in marketing is referred to as co-branding (see Huber et al. (2009)). Activated memory content – which is conscious – can also purposefully use information about a product or brand for interpretation of another product or brand (see Gierl (2004)). In marketing this process is called a signal of quality. It is assumed that very well-known anchor products are often used as a signal of quality (Gierl, 2004).

The primary aim of advertising is to increase the attractiveness and the awareness level of brands, to make brands recognizable. People are influenced by brand names in consumption decisions. A lot of advertising is an assumption of a strong link between brand recognition and consumer preferences (Hauser, 2011). Weighing up all information about competing products would be very time-consuming and exhausting; therefore people simplify decisions and judgments in this context. In addition, brand names also point to established products. They give us certainty and support a simplified decision. In an experiment of Hoyer and Brown (1990) participants had to choose the best-tasting peanut butter out of three samples. It was found that if the brand was unknown participants chose with a higher probability the top-quality peanut butter. But if a well-known brand name was bonded with an inferior peanut butter, participants preferred this inferior brand product (see also Macdonald and Sharp (2000)).

Therefore, the recognized brand name alone has a very strong effect on judgments and decisions. Applying the recognition heuristic in the consumer market would usually be ecologically rational. As in the example of the city task, here too there exists a positive correlation between recognition and criterion. The higher the quality of a product or brand, the better known the product or brand is. Thoma and Williams (2013) showed that participants' choices were largely based on brand recognition. The authors also determined that the choice is affected by additional information. They concluded that recognition is employed as an initial important first step in the decision-making process.

Trailers, or previews of coming films, are short clips usually 1–3 min long that display images from a specific feature film. They are scheduled to run anywhere from weeks to months before the actual movie's release. They are either shown prior to other films or are presented via web streaming. Nowadays the movie trailer is the main tool to introduce the new movie to the public with the purpose of building expectations about the new movie by providing actual scenes (Stapleton and Hughes, 2005). Trailers are a form of advertising and have been found to be the most effective method of movie promotion (Hixson, 2006). Their purpose is to influence moviegoing decision-making so that consumers want to see the film. Although nowadays it is usual to present movie trailers with a short fade-in of a successfully released film title, I am unaware of any past research about this. The current study aims to find out whether people resort to recognition of the faded-in movie title in the assessment of movie trailers. A crucial question arises at this point: how do people judge, decide and assess movie trailers and what are the key factors people take into account? Which elements make a movie trailer attractive? Finsterwalder et al. (2012) investigated the effectiveness of movie trailers on the basis of the audience expectations after watching the trailer. They identified the following elements which influenced the film expectations: People (Actors and Director), Style, Story (Plot, Dialog, and Exposure), Music and Genre. In the present study an open question explored the reasons for choosing one of the trailers; these have then been evaluated with the just described elements. As Herr (1989) postulated, Finsterwalder et al. (2012) found that if the participants have much knowledge of actors they rely more on previous experiences, while participants with less knowledge about directors and makers form impressions based on the trailers. For this reason, the authors suggest creating a connection between new films and successfully released films shot by the same director, which has been implemented in the present study.

The current investigation aims to establish whether people resort to the recognition of a single cue in the assessment of movie trailers and which information and factors play a decisive role for this. To do so, paired comparisons were made up of two unknown animated movie trailers which were, however, distinct from a fade-in of a short unknown or known movie title (e.g., "From the makers of *Ice Age*"). Thus a link was created between a new film and a successfully released film by the same director. Neither of the two had been released at the time the study was conducted. I opted for these animated films as there was no risk that the participants could be influenced by famous actors, environments or other familiar elements.

The current research hypothesis goes as follows (H1): in a paired comparison of movie trailers the movie with a fade-in of a well-known and successful movie title will be chosen more successfully than the movie faded-in with an unknown and unsuccessful movie title. Further issues concern the matching of the faded-in movie title to the trailer. Do people simplify decisions in the complex context of movie trailers and base their decision on recognition of one single cue and ignore important factors?

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1029070>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1029070>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)