

Consumers stop buying as number of options increase

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It is a common belief that having more options is better, and that people tend to go to stores that provide them with more choices. However, a new study in the journal *Psychology & Marketing* reveals that when people cannot easily determine which option is preferable, they are more likely to leave the store empty-handed.

When [options](#) are very similar or the options are difficult to compare, [people](#) are likely to leave the store without making a [choice](#). If there isn't enough time to acquire the necessary information for making a choice, then the individual may leave without choosing anything.

Researcher Beth Veinott, Ph.D., and colleagues performed the first simulation of the choice overload effect in which people sometimes prefer a choice among fewer options than more options. The study provides explanations for why the behavioral experiments of this effect have received mixed results.

"With the rise of the internet, the number of choices that people have is only increasing," the authors conclude. "Our research suggests that there may be a downside to this increase of options affecting people's ability to decide in a particular situation."

Various facets of what has been characterized as the "tyranny of choice" are explored in other articles featured in the March issue of *Psychology & Marketing*, a special issue devoted to research on consumer behavior as it relates to purchase intent and purchase choice.

More information: March 2009 issue of *Psychology & Marketing*,
[www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo ... 1/122186742/abstract](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo...1/122186742/abstract)

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