

# Consumers value difficult decisions over easy choices

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Let's say you want to purchase a camera, and you're comparing two different advertisements. In one, the font, colors, and layout make the information easy to read. The other has an obscure style that takes more time for you to understand. If you decide to purchase the second camera with the more confusing advertisement, new research out of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute shows that, over time, you'll likely be happier with

your choice.

In a paper co-authored by Gaurav Jain, an assistant professor of marketing in the Lally School of Management at Rensselaer, researchers found that disfluency, or the difficulty for an individual to process a message, increases people's attitudes toward that message after a [time delay](#).

"This research has real-life impact," Jain said. "Most of the time, marketing communicators try to make their message clear. What we learned, however, is that there are certain times, especially when people need to make choices, when we should actually use disfluent stimuli so that whatever people are choosing, they will like it once time has passed."

Using primary data collection designed by Jain of about 500 diverse individuals, researchers also found that consumers misattribute the time spent in the decision-making process. Rather than recognizing that the lengthy decision came from trying to understand the information, when looking back on the process, consumers instead believe they spent the time on making the decision. This leads the consumer to believe the [decision](#) they made was informed and worthy.

These findings have implications for [marketing communications](#) in many fields.

"When people are making decisions," Jain said, "be it choosing between insurance products, retirement funds, or even when choosing an elected official, marketers and designers need to remember that if we can make an individual spend some time in that choosing process, it's more likely people will stick with the option they chose over time."

Jain posits that when consumers' attitudes about a product increase, the

impact on post-[purchase decisions](#) like returns and reviews of the product will be more favorable to the brand.

**More information:** Gaurav Jain et al, (The lack of) fluency and perceptions of decision making, *Journal of Marketing Communications* (2020). [DOI: 10.1080/13527266.2020.1815072](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2020.1815072)

Provided by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

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