Research Group
Diginomics
Digitalization - Economy - Society

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The Effects of Product Cues on Choice

An Empirical Study on Auditory (vs. Textual) Choice Options

Relevance

Voice assistants (VAs) have become widely adopted by consumers to conduct a variety of everyday tasks.[1] Voice search and voice shopping are two of these tasks, which are receiving increasing attention from consumers. Gartner (2016) estimates that VAs will soon replace other technologies such as PCs and laptops for many shopping activities.[2] Accordingly, Algolia (2020) shows that, in 2020, 51% of online customers already use VA to search for products before making a purchase and 43% use VA to shop.[3]

Motivation

VAs alter the way in which consumers search and choose products by taking over parts of consumers' decision making processes, lowering the costs of gathering information and offering new ways to present products.[4] Despite the importance of voice search in consumers' daily lives and against the background of its estimated future growth, little is known about whether and how search behavior and product choice are changed by the use of VAs.[5] In particular, this study investigates how different product cues presented in auditory choice options (vs. the "normal" textual representation) change consumers' choice behavior.

Theoretical Background

Consumers use information on various cues to choose the right product for them. Commonly studied marketing cues include "brand name" and "price"[6]. Beside these cues, in today's online decision environment, new cues (e.g., "top rated"[7], "best seller"[8], or "retailer's choice") are frequently employed by marketers to assist consumers in making a choice. These cues can contribute information about the quality and value of a product and can therefore increasing certainty in the decision process[9].

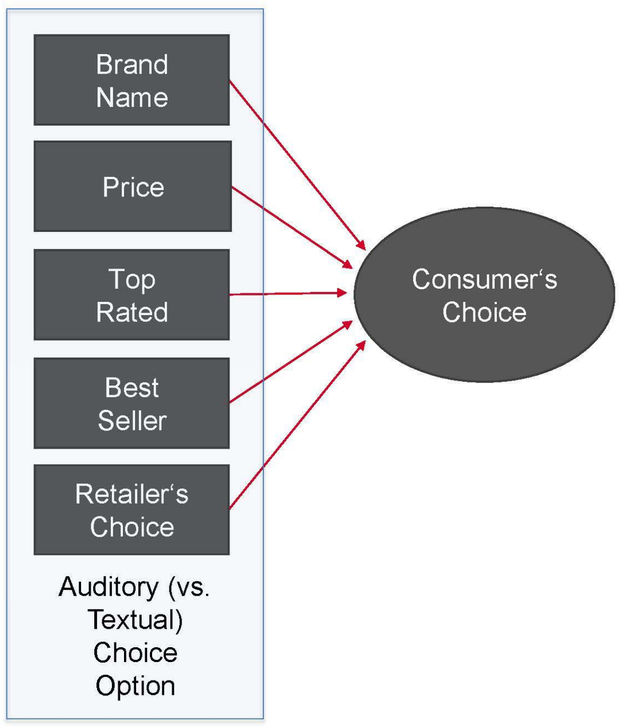
Research Questions

Despite the prevalence of research on the usefulness of cues in product choice, it is unclear how consumers react to product cues presented in the auditory mode.

This study extends the model of Kostyra et al. (2016)[10] by adding several variables, namely, top-rated, best seller, and retailer's choice (e.g., Amazon' choice) to answer the question:

How does consumer's choice change (compared to textual representation) when they receive auditory choice options with varying products cues?

Conceptual Model



Method

Conjoint analysis[11] will be applied to understand how customers trade-off between various product cues and how this process influences their choices. Five main product cues with two levels (2^5= 32 scenarios) will be combined to build descriptions of hypothetical bundles (for both modes). To reduce the scenarios to a proper level, a fractional factorial design will be used. Then, respondents will have to choose between the hypothetical options read aloud to them/the options presented in text form to them.

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