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ADVANCES IN CULTURE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
RESEARCH VOLUME 13

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY RESEARCH

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PREFACE

BUYING, BEHAVING, AND BEING: A PORTRAIT OF CONTEMPORARY TOURISTS

Alain Decrop and Arch G. Woodside

ABSTRACT

The Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure (CPTHL) Symposium, launched 17 years ago, has been the first conference to develop a strong focus on consumer behavior in the field of tourism and leisure from both theoretical and practical perspectives. After a series of eight successful symposia held throughout the World (from Hawaii to Vienna, from Montreal to Istanbul), the Center for Research on Consumption and Leisure (CeRCLe) within the University of Namur has hosted the event in July 2015. This book features a selection of the best papers that have been presented during the symposium plus two additional papers that complement and extend the theme of this volume. The core focus of this volume is on describing and interpreting contemporary tourists and their behaviors: buying behaving, and being tourists.

Keywords: Consumer; psychology; symposium; tourism

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior nowadays represents the major research stream in marketing as product choice and consumption are keys to business success and to a better comprehension of human beings. In the past decades, the study of consumer behavior has been widely integrated into the body of tourism and leisure research. A large number of researchers have been involved in an attempt to

assess the relevance and to test the validity of consumer theories/models in this context.

The eight chapters that are included below refer to the symposium's theme "buying, behaving, and being." For a long time, consumer behavior has been concerned with the activities and processes underlying the decision-making process for buying products or services. In the nineteen-eighties, the experiential aspects of consumption have been investigated as well. The issue of concern is no longer only on why and how a product is purchased but also on how it is consumed and what does this mean to consumers. More recently, in the wake of the "Consumption Culture Theory" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), scholars are investigating the extent to which buying and consuming a series of products and brands may also support identity construction and maintenance: consumer research should not only focus on buying and behaving but should consider being as well.

CHOICE OVERLOAD

Chapter 1, written by Nguyen T. Thai and Ulku Yuksel, deals with choice overload, which is a major current concern for both consumers and companies. In their conceptual chapter, Thai and Yuksel investigate what tourists and travel advisors may learn from choice overload research. The literature in psychology and marketing has well documented that having too many options leads to negative consequences, such as choice regret or deferral. In contrast, empirical evidence of choice overload in the tourism context is limited, even though tourists are often faced with huge choice sets when planning their holidays (e.g., destinations, airfares, hotels, tours). This chapter reviews and applies insights from the choice overload literature to tourism research. In addition, Thai and Yuksel propose a series of solutions to overcome the negative effects of choice overload.

MUNDANE PLACE CONSUMPTION

In Chapter 2, entitled "From Tourism Destination to Mundane Consumption of Place: An Asian Introspection of France," Wided Batat and Sakal Phou investigate how the image of a destination is formed through interactions between visitors and the visited places. More specifically, the authors seek to understand the processes that lead visitors to make sense of their destination experience for themselves and for others, and to transmit that image through storytelling. Subjective personal introspection and longitudinal observation have been used to collect data and acquire an insider perspective on the image of France as experienced by an Asian researcher living, working, and travelling

in France. By taking such a holistic insider's perspective, Batat and Phou show how the image of a destination may evolve from a tourism destination to a mundane (nontourist) consumption place.

RUSSIAN CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON TRAVEL PRACTICES

In Chapter 3, Ekaterina Miettinen explores the influence of Russian culture and society on travel practices during Soviet times and now, through the lens of Russian women. Based on the life-stories of six informants who lived in the USSR and worked for the government, her study analyses major themes related to traveling, including norms and rules, gender aspects, Russianness, and habitus. Miettinen's study shows how historical and social contexts shaped women's behavior and travel practices in the past and continue to be influential nowadays. The chapter draws on Consumer Culture Theory and more specifically on social reality, gender literature, Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and sociohistoric patterning of consumption to account for these travel practices.

TRAVEL-RELATED BEHAVIOR ON FACEBOOK

In Chapter 4, Sanja Božić and Tamara Jovanović examine how travel-related patterns of behavior on Facebook (FB) differ among users of different gender, age, and educational backgrounds. The authors carried out an online survey, collecting data from 793 Serbian respondents. Their results show that travel-related statuses on FB generally pertain to respondents' visited destinations and that these are more likely to post information when they have positive impressions about the destination. Women, more educated, and older people appear to be the most active in sharing travel-related information and are therefore target groups for promoting travel destinations via electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

VISITOR'S GAZE

Chapter 5 by Taketo Naoi, Akira Soshiroda, and Shoji Iijima elucidates the relationships between the elements that visitors gaze at in a historical district and the achievement of travel objectives. The authors surveyed 1,000 visitors to Takayama, Japan about whether or not they had seen 19 elements relating to the destination, and then asked to rate the impressiveness of those they had seen. Respondents also rated the extent to which seven objectives related to learning and interaction had been achieved during their visits. Noi et al.'s results suggest that visitors who gaze at various elements may strongly perceive

opportunities to achieve their objectives, that is, learning about a destination and interacting with other people. Gazing at the multifaceted aspects of a historical district appears to foster a visitor's understanding of the destination.

EXPERIENCES IN NATURAL PARKS

In Chapter 6, Anne-Marie Lebrun and her colleagues compare two protected natural parks (in France and in Taiwan) as specific contexts likely to generate different experiences for visitors. Drawing on the frameworks of the experiential consumption that Carù and Cova (2007) and Pine and Gilmore (2011) propose, the authors carried out both a qualitative study to characterize each natural park and a quantitative study to compare actual visitors' experiences on four dimensions (esthetics, escapism, education, and entertainment) in both countries. Findings of the qualitative study suggest that the Taiwanese park provides an experiential context with more extraordinary and memorable experiences while the French park provides an experiential context with more ordinary and mundane experiences. The results of the quantitative study show that visitors' experiences are characterized by more immersion through esthetics and escapism in Taiwan and more absorption through education and entertainment in France.

REDIRECTION THEORY FOR REDUCING ROAD RAGE

Road rage is expression of aggressive or angry behavior by drivers of road vehicles towards other drivers and/or pedestrians that includes rude gestures, verbal insults, physical threats, or dangerous driving methods targeted toward other drivers in an effort to intimidate, hurt, possibly kill, and/or release frustration. Road rage frequently leads to altercations, assaults, and collisions that result in serious physical injuries or even death. In Chapter 7, Laura Herbst, Dominik Reinartz, and Arch G. Woodside ponder whether or not the redirection theory may be useful for reducing tendencies toward road rage behavior. These authors apply asymmetric models to create algorithms regarding who engages in road and who does not. These algorithms include configurations of demographic, prosocial, and additional antisocial behaviors.

THEORETICAL ISSUES IN TOURIST BEHAVIOR

Chapter 8 closes the book by taking a broad and deep look into identifying and solving a few core theoretical issues in consumer behavior of tourism. In Chapter 8, Arch G. Woodside reviews studies in the literature that attempt to

solve five core theoretical issues in basic and applied fields of study: describe who is doing what, when, where, how, and the consequences of the activities; explain the meanings of activities and motivations of the actors; predict (model) what actions and outcomes will occur and the impacts of influence attempts before, during, and after engaging in tourist actions; control (influence) the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and assessments of tourists, local community members, and additional stakeholders; evaluate tourism service/product delivery, tourism management performance, and customer satisfaction.

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT CAN TOURISTS AND TRAVEL ADVISORS LEARN FROM CHOICE OVERLOAD RESEARCH?

Nguyen T. Thai and Ulku Yuksel

ABSTRACT

The choice overload (CO) phenomenon, whereby having many options leads to negative consequences, has been studied widely in psychology and marketing. However, empirical evidence of CO in the tourism context is limited, even though people often encounter numerous choices (e.g., vacation destinations, airfares, hotels, tours) at different stages when planning their holidays. Investigating CO in tourism and hospitality is important because (online) travel advisors are providing tourists with numerous choices, yet they do not know whether or not these decision makers are content after choosing from these large choice sets. This chapter proposes to review and apply insights garnered from the CO literature to tourism research. Accordingly, the chapter proposes five groups of solutions for tourists and travel advisors to avoid CO effects: reducing decision task difficulty, reducing choice-set complexity, reducing preference uncertainty, focusing on decision goals rather than the means to achieve those goals, and adopting appropriate decision-making styles.

Keywords: Choice overload; assortment size; tourist decision-making; travel decisions

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INTRODUCTION

Choice overload (CO) is a phenomenon whereby choosing from large assortments results in negative consequences and perceptions (Chernev, Böckenholt, & Goodman, 2015; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd, 2010). However, most empirical studies reporting this phenomenon have been conducted in the context of everyday retail products such as consumables like chocolates, jams, and crackers, to name a few. Despite the evidence of the presence of CO effects in physical products, such empirical evidence is less common in other areas, such as in complex service contexts (Chernev et al., 2015; Scheibehenne et al., 2010). To explain this lack of evidence, one could argue that CO studies often rely on retail products instead of services because the implementation of experimental designs is more convenient. Alternatively, others contend that CO effects do not exist in complex service contexts because high levels of financial or emotional risks encourage people to become highly involved in the decision-making process (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), and thus, they want more choice. Therefore, the question regarding the existence of CO in complex service contexts has yet to be answered.

Within the tourism literature, evidence of CO effects is also very limited (McKercher & Prideaux, 2011; Rodríguez-Molina, Frías-Jamilena, & Castañeda-García, 2015), except for three studies (Park & Jang, 2013; Thai & Yuksel, 2017a, 2017b). Tourism researchers have not actively engaged in the academic conversation as to whether tourists experience CO during their vacation decision-making processes. The lack of research about CO effects in tourism is surprising because tourists usually encounter numerous options when making travel decisions (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; McCabe, Li, & Chen, 2016). For that reason, tourism researchers should investigate CO effects because understanding how tourists make choices from large assortments will challenge the assumptions embedded in previous, general tourist decision-making models, that tourists are rational decision makers and utility maximizers (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; McCabe et al., 2016).

This book chapter applies current understandings of CO from psychology and marketing to tourism research. Specifically, the chapter builds on Chernev et al.'s (2015) conceptual model of the impact of assortment size on CO. Chernev et al.'s (2015) model integrates numerous factors that eliminate or mitigate CO effects as there has not been consensus among previous studies in explaining clearly when CO effects occur. This book chapter extends Chernev et al.'s (2015) model by adding another moderator group; that is additional factors eliminating CO effects. Then, the chapter applies the modified model to recommend five groups of solutions for tourists and travel advisors to help their customers avoid CO effects: reducing decision task difficulty, reducing choice-set complexity, reducing preference uncertainty, focusing on goals rather than the means to achieve those goals, and adopting appropriate decision-making styles.

CHOICE OVERLOAD AND MODERATORS

Moderators of CO include factors that explain when CO effects occur, increase, decrease, or are reversed. According to Chernev et al. (2015), CO research investigates causal relationships between the number of choices and subjective states (e.g., satisfaction, regret, confidence) or behavioral outcomes (e.g., making no choice, switching to another option, choosing small assortments, choosing utilitarian options). This literature stream challenges the conventional belief that "more is better" by providing empirical evidence that "less is more."

Most people believe that having more choices is better than having just a few. Economists claim that having more choices maximizes utility because people can make better informed decisions (Benartzi & Thaler, 2001; Lancaster, 1990). This economic perspective is supported by other studies in psychology (e.g., Langer & Rodin, 1976); decision-making (e.g., Bown, Read, & Summers, 2003); consumer behavior (e.g., Greenleaf & Lehmann, 1995); and marketing (e.g., Anderson, Taylor, & Holloway, 1966). The retail industry also reaps the benefits of having large assortments (Broniarczyk, Hoyer, & McAlister, 1998; Kahn & Lehmann, 1991). Specifically, stores with larger assortments are perceived as more attractive (Oppewal & Koelemeijer, 2005), and achieve more sales (Kahn & Wansink, 2004; Koelemeijer & Oppewal, 1999) than stores with smaller assortments.

Paradoxically, a superfluity of choices restricts decision-making. Although large assortments may seem appealing, people also face a high level of uncertainty and difficulty when trying to select the optimal alternative. This argument is evidenced in Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) experiments. They find that, when compared with people choosing from a small choice set (six options), people choosing chocolates from a large choice set (30 options) perceive that the task is not only more enjoyable but also more difficult and frustrating. Unexpectedly, the authors also find that people in the large choice set are less likely to purchase and are less satisfied with their choice than people in the small choice set. Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) seminal paper has heated up the debate on CO and attracted more attention from researchers in different fields and disciplines.

While empirical evidence of the CO phenomenon has been reported widely, previous studies fail to come to a cohesive understanding as to whether and when CO effects arise (Chernev et al., 2015). To resolve the paradox of having many choices, Scheibehenne et al. (2010) and Chernev et al. (2015) conduct separate meta-analyses to investigate whether the CO phenomenon is robust. On the one hand, Scheibehenne et al. (2010) claim that the CO phenomenon does not exist, and no sufficient boundary condition has been found in which CO effects reliably occur. On the other hand, Chernev et al. (2015) argue that the negative effect of assortment size on CO is significant, even after the influences of boundary conditions are accounted for. Chernev et al.'s (2015)

meta-analysis also addresses Scheibehenne et al.'s (2010) limitations by having a larger data set and conceptually deriving moderating factors before the analysis is run (instead of simply reporting moderators from individual studies).

The CO literature also provides some plausible explanations as to why people feel overwhelmed when choosing from a large range of items. It is arguable that CO effects occur as a result of comparisons between diminished benefits versus increasing costs when the assortment size increases (Chernev & Hamilton, 2009; Kaplan & Reed, 2013; Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009). The extensive cognitive effort required to evaluate options (Fasolo, Carmeci, & Misuraca, 2009; Sela, Berger, & Liu, 2009) or increasing anticipated regret and counterfactual thinking (Carmon, Wertenbroch, & Zeelenberg, 2003; Fasolo, McClelland, & Todd, 2007; Goodman, Broniarczyk, Griffin, & McAlister, 2013; Gourville & Soman, 2005; Gu, Botti, & Faro, 2013; Sagi & Friedland, 2007) can also explain why people are less content with alternatives chosen from large assortments. In addition, people may be less satisfied with their choice because their high expectations for the alternative chosen from large, rather than small, assortments are disconfirmed (Diehl & Poynor, 2010). Nevertheless, the CO literature has not reached a comprehensive understanding as to under which conditions these underlying processes occur.

Recently, CO research has shifted from presenting empirical evidence of CO effects to finding certain boundary conditions as to when CO reliably happens or is alleviated (Chernev, Böckenholt, & Goodman, 2010). Chernev et al. (2015) integrate previous studies by categorizing CO moderators into two broad types: (1) *extrinsic moderators*, which relate to a choice problem and are applied to all individuals, and (2) *intrinsic moderators*, which reflect personal knowledge and motivations when dealing with the choice problem (see Fig. 1).

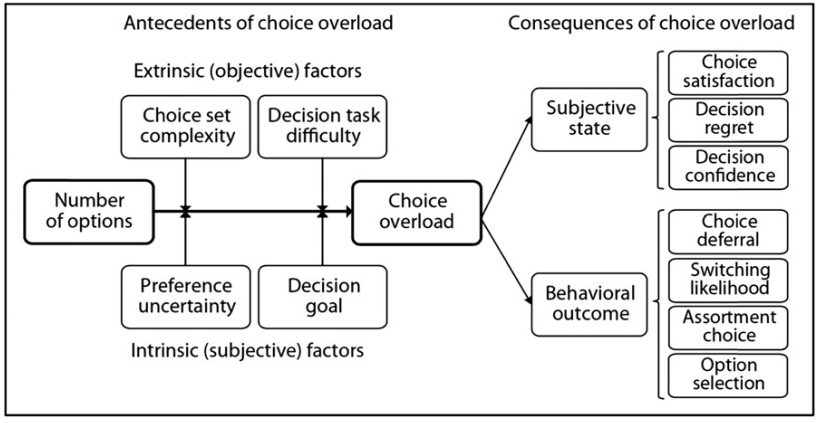

Fig. 1. Conceptual Model of the Impact of Assortment Size on Choice Overload (Chernev et al., 2015).

Chernev et al. (2015) further divide extrinsic moderators into two groups: *decision task difficulty* and *choice-set complexity*. Decision task difficulty moderators affect characteristics of the whole decision-making problem but do not influence values of particular options in the choice set (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993). In this group, Chernev et al. (2015) find four moderators: time constraints (Haynes, 2009; Inbar, Botti, & Hanko, 2011); decision accountability (i.e., requiring consumers to justify their decisions, Gourville & Soman, 2005; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd, 2009); number of attributes describing each option (Gourville & Soman, 2005; Greifeneder, Scheibehenne, & Kleber, 2010); and presentation format (Townsend & Kahn, 2014). This chapter adds three additional moderators: acts of choice closure (i.e., signaling that the choice has been completed, Gu et al., 2013); recommendation signage (Goodman et al., 2013); and decision target (Polman, 2012). Furthermore, this chapter finds further empirical evidence for presentation format (Langner & Krengel, 2013; Mogilner, Rudnick, & Iyengar, 2008). The effects of decision task difficulty moderators are summarized in Table 1.

Unlike decision task difficulty moderators, choice-set complexity moderators affect values of particular options in the available choice set (Payne et al., 1993). These moderators include the presence of a dominant option (Sela et al., 2009), the options' overall attractiveness (Chernev & Hamilton, 2009), the options' alignability (Gourville & Soman, 2005), and the complementarity of options (Chernev, 2005). This chapter identifies additional empirical support for the moderating role of options' attractiveness (Bollen, Knijnenburg, Willemsen, & Graus, 2010; Chan, 2015; Su, Chen, & Zhao, 2009) and options' alignability (Kim, Shin, & Han, 2014). The effects of choice-set complexity moderators are summarized in Table 2.

Chernev et al. (2015) split intrinsic moderators into two groups: *preference uncertainty* and *decision goals*. Preference uncertainty moderators influence the extent to which consumers have established their preferences when making choices. Preference uncertainty is often driven by consumers' product-specific expertise (Chernev, 2003; Mogilner et al., 2008; Morrin, Broniarczyk, & Inman, 2012) or an available ideal point of preferences (Chernev, 2003). This chapter identifies two other moderators: subjective knowledge (Hadar & Sood, 2014) and affect (Spassova & Isen, 2013). The chapter also adds empirical evidence for the moderating effect of consumers' expertise in creativity (Sellier & Dahl, 2011) and finance domains (Agnew & Szykman, 2005). Notably, subjective knowledge is different from domain-specific expertise such that the former can be manipulated. For example, after comparing themselves to a more (or less) knowledgeable person, people often have negative (or positive) perceptions of their knowledge levels in a specific domain (Fox & Weber, 2002; Hadar, Sood, & Fox, 2013). The effects of preference uncertainty moderators are summarized in Table 3.

Finally, decision goal moderators influence the extent to which consumers want to minimize the required cognitive effort when making a choice. Chernev

Table 1. Moderators of Assortment Size Effect – Decision Task Difficulty.

Authors (Year)	Moderators	Product Context	Findings
Gourville and Soman (2005)	Number of attributes (full profile vs. simplified profile) Decision accountability (decisions as final – no exchange vs. ability to exchange products after decisions are made)	Cameras Golf balls	In the context of a unalignable brand assortment (alternatives are different along multiple dimensions): - Facing the cognitively effortful task of choosing alternatives described in "full profile," relative to "simplified profile," adding more alternatives decreases preference as well as likelihood to choose the target brand - Under the no-exchange condition (i.e., decisions are final), relative to the exchange condition (i.e., decisions are not final), and people are less likely to choose the target brand when adding more alternatives due to the high level of regret. They are more regretful when having more alternatives because they have to trade-off one attractive attribute to compensate another. Hence, people in the no-exchange condition are required to justify their choice
Mogilner et al. (2008)	Presentation format (mere categories)	Coffee	Preference constructers choosing from 50 uncategorized options are less satisfied with the selection than preference constructers choosing from five options. However, the mere presence of categories, regardless of their content, reduces this detrimental effect by signaling greater variety in large assortments
Haynes (2009)	Time constraints (decision time: limited vs. extended)	Prizes	Choosing from a large set with a limited amount of time increases decision difficulty and frustration compared to the other three conditions
Scheibehenne et al. (2009)	Decision accountability (justification vs. no justification)	Charities	People who are required to justify their decision find choosing from a large (vs. small) assortment more difficult, and hence they are less likely to donate
Greifeneder et al. (2010)	Number of attributes	Pens MP3 players	Satisfaction with the choice decreases when alternatives are differentiated on many attributes but not when alternatives are differentiated on few attributes
Inbar et al. (2011)	Time constraints	DVDs	When people believe that they have enough time to choose, assortment size does not influence regret

Polman (2012)	Decision target (self vs. other, social distance) Decision accountability (justification to the professor vs. justification but no one in particular)	Paint swatches Wine stores School courses	When people make choices for themselves, choosing among many (vs. few) options reduces satisfaction. However, when people make choices for others, choosing among many (vs. few) options increases satisfaction, and this is a reversal of choice overload effect. Research on regulatory focus can explain these findings. For accountable participants, satisfaction is lower after choosing among many options compared to few options. For nonaccountable participants, satisfactions with the choice selected from many versus few options do not differ. More importantly, accountability moderates the relationship between self–other decision-making and choice overload: when people are held accountable for their choices, choice overload is present when making choices for both self and others
Goodman et al. (2013)	Recommendation signage	Chocolates	Recommendation signage creates preference conflict when choosing from large assortments, leading consumers to form larger consideration sets and ultimately experience more decision difficulty. These effects are only significant for consumers with more developed preferences
Gu et al. (2013)	Acts of choice closure (e.g., covering or turning a page on the rejected options)	Chocolates	Performing acts of closure increases satisfaction with the option chosen from large assortments compared with the options from small assortments. The act of closure prevents participants from engaging in comparisons among alternatives
Langner and Krengel (2013)	Presentation format (mere categories)	Mobile phones	For complex products, the mere categorization effect (Mogilner et al., 2008) only helps novices to reduce the perceived difficulty of choosing when category labels are informative
Townsend and Kahn (2014)	Presentation format (visual vs. verbal)	Crackers Nail polish colors Mutual funds	While images produce greater perceptions of variety than text and are appealing in assortment selection, visual (vs. verbal) presentation associating with less systematic processing results in choice complexity and overload when choice sets are large and preferences are unknown

Table 2. Moderators of Assortment Size Effect – Choice Set Complexity.

Authors (Year)	Moderators	Product Context	Findings
Chernev (2005)	Complementarity of options	Toothpaste MP3 players	Feature complementarity is the extent to which features complement each other to help fulfill a particular need When choosing from assortments including options with complementary features, large (vs. small) assortments tend to increase choice deferral. In contrast, when options in an assortment have noncomplementary features, small assortments tend to increase choice deferral
Gourville and Soman (2005)	Options' alignability	Microwave ovens	In an alignable assortment (brands are different along a single, compensatory dimension), adding more alternatives can efficiently meet the diverse tastes of consumers and hence increase brand share. In a nonalignable assortment (brands are different along multiple, noncompensatory dimensions), adding more alternatives increases both cognitive effort and anticipated regret, and subsequently, decreases brand share
Chernev and Hamilton (2009)	Options' overall attractiveness	Sandwiches shop CD shop Jam shops	Consumer preference for retailers that offer large assortments decreases as the attractiveness of the options in their assortments increases
Sela et al. (2009)	Presence of dominant (justifiable options) option	Laptops printers MP3 players	When hedonic options are harder to justify (i.e., when participants do not have the right to indulge), large assortments lead to increased selection of utilitarian options. When participants have a readily accessible reason to reward themselves, large assortments lead to increased selection of pleasurable options
Su et al. (2009)	Options' overall attractiveness	Computers Mobile phones	When rejected attractive alternatives come from within the consideration set, large sets heighten the feeling of regret. When rejected attractive alternatives come from outside the consideration set, the effect of large sets is mitigated.
Bollen et al. (2010)	Options' overall attractiveness	Movies	Large (vs. small) choice sets containing only high-quality items do not necessarily lead to higher choice satisfaction because the increased choice set's attractiveness is counteracted by increased choice difficulty
Kim et al. (2014)	Options' alignability	Art posters	Large assortments can lead to greater satisfaction only when consumers' consideration sets and preference contrast (i.e., the distinctiveness of the chosen option compared with other unchosen alternatives) increase
Chan (2015)	Options' overall attractiveness	Documentaries	Having more attractive choices reduces satisfaction with the chosen option because their weaknesses are highlighted, but having more unattractive choices increases satisfaction because their strengths are highlighted

Table 3. Moderators of Assortment Size Effect – Preference Uncertainty.

Authors (Year)	Moderators	Product Context	Findings
Chernev (2003)	Articulated ideal point	Chocolates	Ideal point availability (i.e., establishing preferences to the choice making) can simplify the decision-making process when choosing from large assortments and hence lead to a stronger preference for the selected option. Ideal point availability has the opposite effect for small assortments, leading to weaker preference
Agnew and Szykman (2005)	Product-specific expertise	Mutual funds	Low-knowledge individuals are overwhelmed regardless of the number of choices. High-knowledge individuals experience greater feelings of overload with more choices
	Presentation format (table vs. booklet)		Low-knowledge individuals are less likely to choose the default asset allocation plan when given more choices
			High-knowledge individuals who are given the table format are less overloaded than low-knowledge individuals who are given either format. No differences in the overload measure of the high-knowledge participants in the booklet condition and the low-knowledge individuals in either format
Mogilner et al. (2008)	Product-specific expertise	Coffee	Assortment size does not negatively affect choice satisfaction for choosers who search to match their preexisting preferences
			The mere categorization effect is attenuated for choosers who are familiar with the choice domain
Sellier and Dahl (2011)	Product-specific expertise	Knitting Crafting	Expanding the choice of creative inputs reduces creativity (objectively judged by independent experts) for experienced consumers
Morrin et al. (2012)	Product-specific expertise	Mutual funds	Among low-knowledge investors, a larger assortment reduces plan participation
Spassova and Isen (2013)	Affect	Jams	Positive affect shifts people's focus from the difficulty of making the choice to the perceived quality of the available assortment. Therefore, people who have positive affect do not feel less satisfied with their choice when choosing from a large (vs. small) assortment
Hadar and Sood (2014)	Subjective knowledge	Coffee Red wine	People who are primed to feel unknowledgeable are more willing to purchase when having more available options. This pattern is reversed for people who are primed to feel knowledgeable

et al. (2015) find four moderators that lead to effort-minimizing goals: decision intention (to buy vs. to browse, Oppewal & Koelemeijer, 2005), the need for cognition (Lin & Wu, 2006), decision focus (Chernev, 2006), and construal level (Goodman & Malkoc, 2012). This chapter identifies additional empirical evidence for the moderating effect of construal level (Xu, Jiang, & Dhar, 2013). The effects of these moderators are summarized in Table 4.

A MODIFIED CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE IMPACT OF ASSORTMENT SIZE ON CHOICE OVERLOAD

While Chernev et al.'s (2015) conceptual model is useful to establish a comprehensive understanding of CO effects and boundary conditions, the authors acknowledge that their work still needs development. In fact, their model excludes a few important moderators. For instance, their model should consider the way people make their decisions. Because each decision maker has different approaches when selecting an item from the available assortment – and even the same person may act differently depending on external factors or personal motivations – the way that people make decisions must have an impact on the intensity of CO effects. Accordingly, this chapter adds *decision-making style* as another moderator group (see Fig. 2). Decision-making style is different from decision (effort-minimizing) goal in that the former reflects decision makers' general personalities while the latter reflects their purposes or objectives while making decisions. After scanning the CO literature, the chapter identifies three decision-making style moderators: *unconscious information processing*, *intuitive decision-making style*, and *maximizing/satisficing behaviors*.

Unconscious information processing (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006) refers to the way in which people actively integrate information from outside their focused awareness (e.g., a person is playing games before being asked to select chocolates). Hence, the unconscious information process is different from spontaneous decision-making, which is often based on heuristics and uses little information processing (e.g., a person is presented with an assortment of chocolates but is required to select one immediately). The moderating effect of unconscious information processing in mitigating CO effects is discussed by Messner and Wänke (2011) who find that consumers who are distracted before choosing (i.e., unconsciously), but not when deliberating intensively or choosing spontaneously, do not decrease their satisfaction with their chosen item when choosing from a large (vs. small) choice set. Messner and Wänke (2011) argue that because unconscious information processing is global and holistic (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006), this processing style provides enough cognitive capacity for consumers to cope with the complexity of information in large assortments. Additionally, this holistic approach may elicit more positive feelings than intensive deliberation, whereby consumers face decision difficulty

Table 4. Moderators of Assortment Size Effect – Decision Goal.

Authors (Year)	Moderators	Product Context	Findings
Oppewal and Koelemeijer (2005)	Decision intent (browsing vs. buying)	Flowers	When consumers evaluate assortment options with a goal of browsing (e.g., focus on the assortment), more choice is better
Chernev (2006)	Decision focus (assortment-choice vs. product-choice)	Snack vending machine Chocolate store Pens	When consumers focus on the product-choice task rather than the assortment-choice task, small assortments are more likely to be preferred because product-choice consumers experience more decision difficulty when choosing among large assortments The impact of decision focus on choice making among assortments is due to the hierarchical nature of the choice process
Lin and Wu (2006)	Need for cognition (high vs. low)	Chocolate	People with high need for cognition tend to use systematic processing to make decisions, which encourage them to consider trade-offs among the attributes carefully, and hence are less likely to switch to another option
Goodman and Malkoc (2012)	Construal level (psychological distance: high vs. low)	Restaurant menus ice-cream flavors Vacation options	While consumers prefer large assortments when the choice takes place in the here and now, they are more likely to prefer small assortments when choices pertain to distant locations and times
Xu et al. (2013)	Construal level (abstract vs. concrete)	Preserved plums Tea types Coffee Hotels	When choosing from a large assortment, consumers with an abstract representation perceived the options in the assortment as being more similar and accordingly experience less choice difficulty than those with a concrete representation of the assortment

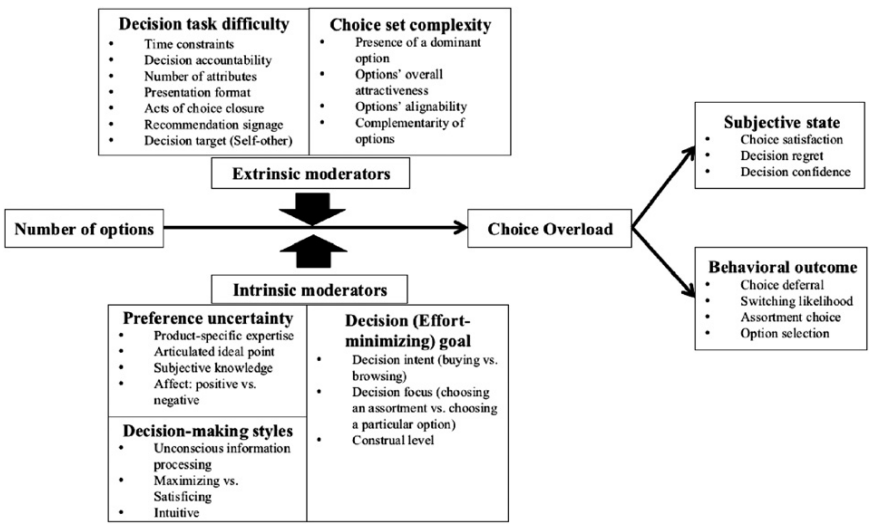

Fig. 2. A Modified Conceptual Model of the Impact of Assortment Size on Choice Overload.

because they focus too much on irrelevant attributes but neglect other crucial information. Spontaneous thinkers may report lower satisfaction with their choice when choosing from large assortments than unconscious thinkers because spontaneous thinkers regret that they have not chosen the alternative that fully meets their preferences due to perceived time constraints.

Another moderator is intuitive decision-making style. Unlike unconscious and spontaneous information processing, consumers who adopt the intuitive decision-making style often rely on their hunches and feelings to make decisions. Because intuitive thinkers do not rely much on their cognitive resources, they may not perceive that having large assortments is overwhelming. For example, intuitive information processing (i.e., choosing affectively) has proved to mitigate the distinction between informative and uninformative category labels on producing a positive decision-making process (Langner & Krengel, 2013). This finding provides a boundary condition for the mere categorization effect (Mogilner et al., 2008), whereby the mere presence of category labels helps novices avoid CO effects when choosing a simple product (e.g., coffee). In other words, Langner and Krengel's (2013) finding indicates that intuitive decision makers can rely on the mere presence of category labels, regardless of their informativeness, to avoid CO effects when choosing complex products (e.g., cellphones).

Finally, the third moderator is maximizing versus satisficing behaviors. While satisficers are inclined to select the first alternative that meets their acceptability threshold and thus are happy with this "good enough" option, maximizers extensively seek the "best" option (Schwartz et al., 2002). As a result, maximizers may feel worse about their choices even though they objectively make a better choice than satisficers (Iyengar, Wells, & Schwartz, 2006). For example, although students with higher maximizing tendencies secure higher paying jobs, they experience more negative affect throughout the job-hunting process, and subsequently, feel less satisfied with their choice (Iyengar et al., 2006). Regarding CO effects, Álvarez, Rey, and Sanchis (2014) find that maximizers, as opposed to satisficers, are more likely to defer their choice when the number of options increases because maximizers perceive a higher cost to deliberate on these choices (i.e., more time is required).

This chapter attempts to apply these current understandings of CO from psychology and marketing to tourism research. In the following sections, this chapter first reviews and identifies the limitations of general tourist decision-making models. The discussion on assumptions made by these general models serves as a broader framework to examine CO effects when tourists plan their vacations. Finally, this chapter applies insights from the modified version of Chernev et al.'s (2015) conceptual model (see Fig. 2) to recommend five groups of solutions for tourists and travel advisors to avoid CO effects.

TOURIST DECISION-MAKING MODELS

The tourism literature has examined issues relating to tourist choice and decision-making for over 50 years (Smallman & Moore, 2010). Previously, general models of tourist decision-making, borrowed from economics, psychology, and consumer research (Decrop & Snelders, 2004), were commonly used by tourism researchers to describe the linear and sequential nature of decision processes. However, the nature of tourist behavior is different from that of consumers purchasing physical goods (Decrop, 2006). For example, the vacation decision-making process is ongoing and does not end once the trip is booked (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). The order in which vacation plans evolve is also difficult to determine (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). Thus, tourism scholars (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; Decrop, 2006, 2014; McCabe et al., 2016; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Smallman & Moore, 2010) have expressed the need for and have proposed new approaches to reconceptualize tourist behavior and decision-making processes.

This chapter first provides a brief discussion of the tourist decision-making literature to understand why a reconceptualization of tourist behavior is necessary. More specifically, the chapter adopts McCabe et al.'s (2016) review of three main theoretical approaches in tourist decision-making models: *the normative approach*, *the cognitive approach*, and *the structured process approach*.

The normative approach views decision makers as economic agents who behave rationally by evaluating the benefits versus the costs of each alternative and then selecting the one with the highest utility value. Rugg (1973) first used this approach in a tourism context, and other scholars have subsequently developed it (e.g., Apostolakis & Jaffry, 2005; Morley, 1994; Papatheodorou, 2001; Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). The limitation of the normative approach is that the utility maximization principle is not always followed (McCabe et al., 2016) because individuals often seek satisficing instead of optimal choices (Simon, 1997). In fact, the rationality of choosing the best option is "bounded" by other psychological factors such as risk or intuitive reasoning (Correia, Kozak, & Tão, 2014).

The cognitive approach relies on the theory of planned behavior, which presumes that people will perform certain behaviors if they trust that these behaviors could lead to beneficial outcomes. In tourism decision-making, this approach suggests that intention to visit a destination can predict actual travel behaviors. Therefore, many tourism studies follow the theory of planned behavior by investigating factors that influence travel intentions (Gnoth, 1997; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Studies relying on the cognitive approach may assume that decision makers always have comprehensive cognitive processing when making a choice (Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli, & Priester, 2002; Smallman & Moore, 2010). However, the cognitive approach may neglect other factors such as emotion, habit, or spontaneity (Hale, Householder, & Greene, 2002), which

cause decision makers to rely on previously formed global affective evaluations (Wright, 1975).

The structured process approach simplifies the decision-making process into arranged stages to help destination marketers create effective advertising messages. Woodside and Sherrell (1977) first applied this approach in a tourism context (e.g., leisure travel). These authors describe a funnel-like decision-making process in which decision makers first develop an initial set of destinations – the awareness set – then eliminate some options to establish a smaller late-consideration set (evoked set), and finally select a destination from this evoked set. Later, other choice sets (e.g., inert set, inept set, action set) are developed (Crompton, 1992) to put destinations in tourists' minds more accurately. While it explains decision-making as a filtering process, the structured process approach does not predict or explain the mental mechanism behind tourist behaviors (Smallman & Moore, 2010). In fact, this approach oversimplifies the reality of decision-making processes (Decrop, 2010).

From this brief discussion of the three main theoretical approaches in tourist decision-making models, one fundamental problem surfaces: tourists are assumed or implied to be rational decision makers and utility maximizers (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; McCabe et al., 2016). This assumption ignores other important factors such as affect, intuition, or subjective and contextual causes that may lead to suboptimal options (Correia et al., 2014; Decrop, 2014). Hence, these general models do not completely reflect realistic tourist decision-making processes. Thus, the extent to which they accurately predict tourist behaviors is unconvincing (Decrop & Snelders, 2004; McCabe et al., 2016; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Smallman & Moore, 2010).

Given this fundamental issue, tourism scholars have expressed the need for a new approach that reconceptualizes tourist behavior and decision-making. To have a stronger explanatory power, future tourist decision-making models must consider psychological and contextual factors as well as multiple types and stages in a tourist's decision strategies (Fleischer, Tchetchik, & Toledo, 2012; McCabe et al., 2016). This requirement is important because previous models were established at a time when the tourism industry was immature (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). Because frameworks were initially developed for consumer goods, they did not consider the hedonic and experiential nature of travel-related choices (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). Today, as travel is part of many people's lifestyles, the way in which people make travel decisions must also have changed. For example, Decrop and Snelders (2004) note that people now have relatively more income and access to a larger number of choice alternatives (e.g., cheaper travel and accommodation options). In addition, McCabe et al. (2016) highlight advancements in mobile Internet technology, which enables vast amounts of information such as promotions or travel deals to become easily accessible, and is one of the drivers forcing the tourism literature to understand how tourists use different decision-making strategies in specific choice contexts. In fact, Decrop and Snelders (2004) and McCabe et al. (2016)

note that assortment size or the number of available alternatives is an important external factor that could affect tourist behavior. This chapter now reviews the extent to which CO effects have been discussed in the tourism literature.

CHOICE OVERLOAD IN TOURIST DECISION-MAKING

This section presents conflicting arguments regarding the existence of CO effects during tourist decision-making processes. Then, three empirical studies that investigate the existence of the CO phenomenon in the tourism context are discussed.

As discussed in the previous section, tourists often look for numerous choices rather than rationally narrow down the number of alternatives during the decision-making process because such a browsing can create enjoyable feelings, experiences, and emotions (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). There is also an assumption that tourists become highly involved in the decision-making process (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), and thus are willing to evaluate many alternatives. This high involvement may be driven by the risky and complex nature of travel decisions (Decrop, 2006; Murray & Schlacter, 1990; Zeithaml, 1988), investments of time and money (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), and uncertainty about unfamiliar travel options (Sirakaya, McLellan, & Uysal, 1996). With these assumptions, it is argued that CO effects may not occur during tourist decision-making processes.

However, CO effects may occur while tourists are unaware of the potential pitfalls of large assortments. Tourists are assumed to possess a novelty and variety-seeking attitude (Cohen, 1979; Feng, 2007; Lee & Crompton, 1992), which encourages them to look for different experiences (Faison, 1977). However, this attitude results in a choice set with many unfamiliar options which is, in fact, an important precondition that triggers CO effects (Scheibehenne et al., 2010). More importantly, tourists may not realize the influence of time pressure while making travel decisions because the seasonal nature of traveling and the aggressive promotions of the travel industry require tourists to act quickly to avoid missing out on good deals (Park & Jang, 2013). Therefore, tourists often feel uncertain about their choices, and the underlying reason for this could be the fact that they do not have enough time to consider all available options.

Empirical evidence of CO effects when tourists make travel decisions is lacking (McKercher & Prideaux, 2011; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015). Pan, Zhang, and Law (2013) investigate the complex matter of online hotel choice and find that having a lengthy set of 20 hotel options, relative to five options, overwhelms people. Subsequently, people have to use strategies (e.g., focusing on price) to reduce the size of the consideration set. However, their conclusion is

not convincing due to a flaw in their factorial between-subject experimental design (e.g., small sample size, $n = 18$).

Evidence of CO effects is found in better-controlled experimental studies. In the context of holiday packages, Park and Jang (2013) find that people are more likely to defer their choice when facing more than 22 options, relative to smaller choice-set sizes. In the context of destination choices whereby the decision is often finalized in the early stages of the vacation decision-making process (Fesenmaier & JiannMin, 2000; Nicolau & Mas, 2008), Thai and Yuksel (2017a, 2017b) find that people who select a vacation destination from a choice set of seven options report lower levels of satisfaction and higher levels of regret than people who select from a choice set containing three options. As tourism decision-making research lacks a conceptual understanding of mental mechanisms as to how tourists make choices (McCabe et al., 2016), Thai and Yuksel's (2017a, 2017b) study also demonstrates the underlying psychological process of CO effects. Specifically, the authors find that choosing from a large choice set increases confusion and subsequently heightens perceived uncertainty, which ultimately decreases satisfaction and increases regret about the choice made.

While more empirical evidence of CO effects in tourism contexts is required, future tourism research also needs to determine boundary conditions in which tourists will not experience these negative perceptions. The next section offers several recommendations as to how tourists and travel advisors can avoid CO effects.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISTS AND TRAVEL ADVISORS

This section applies the modified version of Chernev et al.'s (2015) conceptual model of the impact of assortment size on CO to propose five groups of solutions to avoid CO effects when making travel decisions (see Fig. 3).

First, this chapter discusses several ways to reduce perceived decision task difficulty. Because the tourist decision-making process is a complex one, decision makers are often required to justify why they have selected a particular option. Thus, travel advisors should try to make the process of choosing easier for tourists. For instance, they should be mindful of their use of language when communicating travel deals and promotions to tourists. Travel advisors may think that they can boost tourists' excitement by including phrases such as "Hurry up" or "Last minute deals" in their promotions. On the contrary, these phrases may induce a feeling of being rushed. Indeed, tourists who face time pressures may not engage in a systematic processing that looks at utilitarian attributes but will rather focus on holistic criteria as heuristics to make decisions (McCabe et al., 2016). Subsequently, under time pressures, the choice selected from a large (vs. small) assortment may not be perceived as ideal or

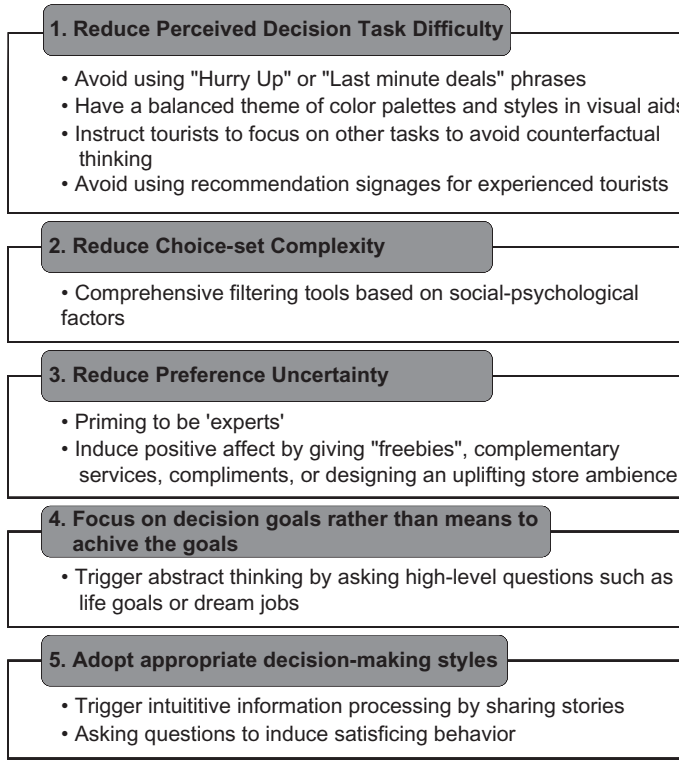

Fig. 3. Strategies to Avoid CO Effects in Tourism.

optimal because tourists' expectations or preferences might not have been met. Travel advisors should therefore ensure that tourists are "guaranteed" of having good deals when booking their holidays.

Travel websites and brochures commonly use visual aids and aspirational photographs to capture tourists' attention. However, the visual presentation format induces less systematic information processing, and thus can intensify CO effects when the assortment size increases (Townsend & Kahn, 2014). Hence, a consistent and balanced theme of color palettes and styles may be necessary to help tourists navigate websites and brochures more easily.

The time that tourists take to deliberate and finalize travel choices differs from that of buying an everyday retail product. In fact, planning a vacation can be "timeless" (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). While some tourists think about their upcoming vacation as soon as their last holiday has ended, which can date back several years, other last-minute travelers complete the decision-making process only a few days before the trip (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). The fact

that the tourist decision-making process is ongoing (Decrop & Snelders, 2004) and tourists sometimes cannot "close" or "complete" the choice makes them more likely to regret their decisions because they may engage in counterfactual thinking. To prevent tourists from engaging in counterfactual thinking, travel advisors can utilize some intervention strategies. These strategies can be as simple as asking tourists to shut their web browsers or putting the travel brochures away after they have completed their bookings. Alternatively, when tourists get stuck during stages in the decision-making process (e.g., finalizing travel periods, budgets, attractions to see), travel advisors can direct them to focus on other tasks (e.g., reading destination guides).

Receiving recommendations from peers or reputable sources is another strategy that tourists rely on to deal with decision task difficulty. In nonpersonal environments such as travel websites, recommendation signage (e.g., the top 10 destinations to visit, the top 5 travelers' picks) is useful to ease the decision-making process. Nevertheless, recommendation signage can be harmful to experienced customers because their established preferences may conflict with alternatives recommended by travel websites (Goodman et al., 2013). Hence, this chapter proposes that travel recommendation signage should be used selectively, depending on tourists' travel experiences and personalities. Perhaps novice travelers or tourists with low self-confidence prefer options recommended by travel websites when the choice-set size is large because they view this decision-making as an opportunity to acquire more knowledge (Goodman et al., 2013). In contrast, experienced travelers or tourists with high self-confidence may be less satisfied with their choice when the recommendation signage is present in large assortments because of potential conflicts between options that they prefer versus alternatives recommended by travel websites.

Second, this chapter focuses on how to reduce choice-set complexity to mitigate CO effects for tourists. The choice set can be less complicated to evaluate if dominant options are available. In fact, dominant options can be salient in large choice sets if decision aid tools such as filtering or sorting are available. However, this solution may not apply to some tourism products that include many noncomparable attributes. As a result, while decision aid tools can identify dominant options, the decision-making is not easier for tourists because they have to make sacrifices and trade-offs. Hence, in tourism contexts, using social-psychological factors to establish a comprehensive filtering and sorting tool is necessary to indicate alternatives that matter the most.

Third, CO effects can be alleviated if tourists are able to decrease their preference uncertainty. Although one may expect that being familiar with assortments or choice sets can increase preference certainty, Park and Jang (2013) do not find empirical support for this hypothesis in their study. Perhaps travel knowledge is so broad that even frequent travelers can sometimes feel less knowledgeable about certain topics. Accordingly, this chapter recommends the use of priming techniques (e.g., asking target tourists to compare themselves to

other reference groups, taking a travel quiz and receiving false results), instead of measuring travel knowledge or other similar constructs (e.g., familiarity, consumption experience), to influence how tourists perceive their travel knowledge. This subjective feeling about their travel knowledge may boost tourists' self-confidence and hence result in positive evaluations of the choice selected from large assortments. Inducing subjective travel knowledge via priming techniques is practical for travel advisors because they can control tourists' perceived confidence and/or uncertainty when choice-set sizes are large.

Preference uncertainty can also be alleviated when tourists have positive affect. Under positive affect, decision makers shift their focus toward the perceived quality of the available assortment instead of the perceived difficulty in choosing (Spassova & Isen, 2013). For example, positive feelings can be activated when people receive "freebies" or complementary services. Positive feelings can also be triggered when tourists visit travel agents' offices because of the uplifting ambience of the environment or as a result of compliments that travel advisors make about their outfits.

Fourth, this chapter recommends that the degree that tourists focus on their goals versus the means to achieve those goals determines whether they experience CO effects when choosing from large choice sets. This recommendation is based on construal level theory (Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007), which assumes that, when thinking about objects, people often focus on either low-level, detailed, and concrete features or high-level and abstract features. For example, when finalizing a destination for their next vacation, tourists may think about specific attractions they want to visit, or they may think about the degree to which a destination reflects their personality. Accordingly, thinking in abstract terms will increase the perceived similarity among alternatives and subsequently decrease decision difficulty (Townsend & Kahn, 2014). Therefore, travel advisors can help tourists alleviate CO effects by triggering tourists' abstract thinking via high-level questions regarding, for example, their life goals, dream jobs, or what happiness means to them.

Finally, this chapter proposes a few suggestions for travel advisors to activate certain decision-making styles that can reduce CO effects. Encouraging tourists to rely on their intuitions and feelings (e.g., how connected they feel toward an alternative) can be a useful strategy when tourists place too much emphasis on utilitarian or functional attributes (e.g., available facilities in a hotel room). To do so, travel advisors may share some inspiring stories about how people gain the best travel experiences when they make decisions based on their feelings and emotions. In addition, satisficing behaviors can also mitigate CO effects. Travel advisors who aim to offer large assortments to tourists should trigger satisficing behaviors by asking questions that require them to choose "good enough" or "acceptable" options instead of "best" options (Ma & Roese, 2014). For example, thinking about the best country to visit or the best university for a good education may activate the maximizing mindset,

while thinking about a country or university that is acceptable may activate the satisficing mindset.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this chapter has two main contributions. First, the chapter proposes a modified version of Chernev et al.'s (2015) conceptual model to provide a more comprehensive picture of the CO literature. Specifically, this chapter adds individuals' decision-making styles as the fifth moderator group, and also identifies additional evidence for the other four moderating groups (i.e., decision task difficulty, choice-set complexity, preference uncertainty, and decision goal) included in the work of Chernev et al. (2015). Previously, Chernev et al. (2015) classified four conceptual moderators after reviewing 16 articles (published from 2000 to 2014). This chapter includes 14 additional articles, including 11 published within the last five years (2011–2015). The fact that most of the other CO studies included in this book chapter were published recently implies that CO remains an important research topic. CO indeed deserves more attention from researchers across disciplines because the problem of feeling overwhelmed by so many choices is relevant to almost every consumer.

Finally, this chapter applies the modified model to recommend five groups of solutions for tourists and travel advisors to avoid CO effects. These include (1) reducing decision task difficulty, (2) reducing choice-set complexity, (3) reducing preference uncertainty, (4) focusing on decision goals rather than the means to achieve those goals, and (5) adopting appropriate decision-making styles. These solutions offer practical implications for tourists and travel advisors in order to avoid negative consequences after choosing from a large assortment. However, these solutions need further empirical support.

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