

Fluency and cognitive control in judgment: Influences of memory and elaborative encoding

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Abstract: Recent research has documented some surprising relations between cognitive control and fluency use in consumer judgments. Theoretically, the observed link is explained by differences in elaborative heuristic search: More elaborate encoding leads to more vivid memory representations, which changes the ease of cognitive processing along with one's subjective basis for judgment. The current research presents new evidence in a stock profit estimation task, documenting a relationship between better memory and the use of fluency. Specifically, participants were provided with fictional company names that varied in their ease of pronunciation, and were asked to judge past company profits. Participants with a higher reliance on the company name pronunciation for their judgments were found to later have higher recall and recognition of company names. Results are consistent with an elaborative heuristic search account of the unusual relationship between heuristics and cognitive control. Implications for dual process theories are discussed.