

5. General Discussion

Mainly, we found the interaction of emotion and decision importance in both experiments. However, the difference between these two experiments provided more information about the interaction effects of emotion and decision importance. Furthermore, in both experiments, we found the method to differentiate different stages which is suggested by Russo and Leclerc (1994) was not working well. Those differences are discussed as follows.

The interaction of emotion and cognition in early process vs. late process

In general, the results from both experiments showed the decision importance indeed mediated the emotion effect on decision. While the decision importance increased, the emotion effect was changed. However, the mediation effects were happened in the different time periods in different experiments. In experiment 1, it was found the interaction happened in early information acquisition and integration process and no early information selective process revealed. But in experiment 2, by adding the heuristic cue and conflicting products information, the interaction of emotion and decision importance was showed in later process and the early information selective process revealed.

Although the interaction was found in both experiments, the inconsistency was noticed. The similar materials and procedure were used in both experiments (notebooks), however, in experiment 2 the differentiated and conflict information was provided by adding the cue. The process difference between two experiments could be explained by the contextual difference. Even if some of the literature review suggested that the subjects under happy emotion usually take the heuristic processing, and the sad emotion cause analytic processing (Forgas, 1989; Schwarz & Bless, 1990),

it is not necessary for the emotion effect always works that way. The emotion effects actually will be changed by the cognitive factors. From the results of these two experiments, the important finding is that it showed not only the decision importance but also the task context mediated the emotion effects.

In the present study, due to the material design, it showed the early selective information effect only happened in the task with useless and useful information involved. Along with the suggestion of Russo and Leclerc(1994), the first stage is characterized as an “orientation” process which includes initial screening out of alternatives . In experiment 1, due to the overall quality of each product was about the same, the initial screening and selective process didn't reveal. But in experiment 2, the additional cue was added and the alternatives have useful and useless information involved, the early selective process revealed. Participants took longer time at products with conflict information (cue products) in the first stage. However, in the second stage and the third stage, participants spent more time on chosen products (non-cue products) in later process. Furthermore, according to Isen (1993) and Forgas's (1991) suggestion, the happy and sad participants in high importance condition should process the information selectively. Both suggestions are supported by the data in experiment 2. In the first stage of experiment 2, the happy participants with high important decision took fewer fixations than the participants with low important decision on cue product. The sad participants in high important decision also took fewer fixations than the participants with low important decision both on cue and non-cue products.

Although in experiment 1, the selective information process didn't reveal, the interaction between emotion and decision importance indeed happened in evaluation process. That is, happy participants with high important decision spent more time on information acquisition and information integration at the second stage. Moreover, in

experiment 2, the interaction of emotion and decision importance also revealed after the important alternatives being selected, and the direction of total time spent on cue and non-cue product was reversed in the second and the third stages. That is, the process difference between happy and sad emotion only showed when the participants faced the low important decision but not when they faced the high important decision.

In sum, the interaction of emotion and decision importance happened in different stages in different experiments indicates that the study of emotion and decision making should no longer only focus on the overall performance but should pay attention to the dynamic process. In addition, with the results from these two experiments, not only the decision importance but also the task context should be considered as an important factor to mediate the emotion effect.

What kinds of indicator can represent systematic process/ heuristic process?

Besides the interaction of emotion and decision found in both experiments, we still tried to find the indicator which can represent the different process. According to Horstmann et al. (under review) they used eye movement measurement and tried to find the difference of analytic and heuristic processing on eye movement parameters too. They used instruction-induced method to distinct two processes by asking participants to use one kind of processing (eg. In the later decision task, you have to use analytic strategy to make a choice). The results showed the major differences between these two processes were: (1) the number of fixations and (2) the amount repeated viewing time in same information. It showed under analytic processing, the number of fixations and the repeated viewing time in same information were higher than heuristic processing. But no specific searching strategy can represent the different processes.

Like the study they have done, in our experiment, no specific eye movement

patterns were associated with any specific strategy. Forgas (1991) suggested the strategy using is different across situations or subjects. If subjects like to use inter-dimension searching, they might like to form an impression of a product first. Otherwise, they like to compare dimension first. In our experiments, it was found participants all like to form an impression of a product first in both experiments. The results showed the proportion of inter-dimension searching were higher than the proportion of intra-dimension searching in every condition. But still, none of any searching strategy can be represented by a specific process.

However, in experiment two, by using different information or using the heuristic cue, the different processes can be revealed into more detail. In future study, by manipulating different information might help to clarify the different processes and find more specific indicators.

The stage clarification method

According to the suggestion of Russo and Leclerc (1994), we divided the decision process into three stages, in order to get the detail decision process. However, along with the definitions of Russo and Leclerc's (1994) stages, we find the three stages can't reveal the real three stages. One reason might due to the eye tracker technique. The eye tracker which was used in Russo and Leclerc (1994) was very simple camera recording. The eye tracker had very low sampling rate and the single fixation duration can't be measured. For the eye tracker technique, the single fixation at that time might be many fixations in our study. Because of this reason, the stage clarification method which was used in Russo and Leclerc (1994) was no longer suitable in the present study. But by the suggestion of Russo and Leclerc (1994), we used the indicator "single elimination" to differentiate the stages again and found the better stages clarification. However, the method used in present study was still a

rough idea. In the future study, how the stage can be differentiated should be developed well and help consumer study to get clearer patterns.

