

Inaction we trust: study 2 (#20841)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

In this study we investigate how prior outcomes and the inaction/action effect influence preferences for advisors.

1. In case of no prior outcomes or positive prior outcomes, the advisor that did not act will be preferred over the one who did act, assuming both action and inaction led to negative outcomes. Additionally, we predict that the advisor who did not act will be seen as more competent, and that his decision will be seen as more in line with social norms (injunctive and descriptive).

2. In case of negative prior outcomes, the advisor who did act will be preferred over the one who did not act, assuming both action and inaction led to negative outcomes. Finally, we predict that the advisor who did act will be seen as more competent, and that his decision will be seen as more in line with social norms (injunctive and descriptive).

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

We will measure preferences for the two advisors, perceived competence, perceived normativity, and perceived regret / joy:

Preference: Which advisor – Paul or George – would you prefer to hire?

Competence: Which advisor – Paul or George – is more competent?

Descriptive norms: Whose behavior – Paul's or George's – is more common among financial advisors?

Injunctive norms: Whose behavior – Paul's or George's – will be more criticised among financial advisors?

Regret: Which advisor – Paul or George – regrets their decision more?

Joy: Which advisor - Paul or George - would have been likely to experience more joy if things had gone well?

Responses will be made on a scale from -5 (Definitely Paul who decided not to switch) to +5 (Definitely George who decided to switch).

The six items will be treated as separate measures, and will not be aggregated.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

There are three conditions (no prior outcomes, positive prior outcomes, and negative prior outcomes) and participants will be randomly assigned to one of the three.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will compare participants' responses across conditions with a series of one-way ANOVAs. If there are significant ANOVAs, then we will use one-sample t-tests to compare responses within each condition to the scale midpoint (0).

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

We will conduct separate analyses excluding participants who fail the attention check (one question).

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

We will recruit enough participants to detect a small-to-medium sized effect ($f = .15$) with 80% power and $\alpha = .05$. Thus, our minimum sample size is 432. Planned sample size $N = 450$.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

As a manipulation check, we have a question measuring to what extent participants expect the advisors to change their behaviour (based on prior outcomes). We expect that responses to this question (expected change) will follow the following pattern: negative prior outcome > no prior outcome > positive prior outcome. We will test these differences with independent t-tests.

We will also look at the correlations between regret, joy, competence, normativeness, and hiring preferences and expect them to be related positively with each other generally. We will also attempt to replicate the finding that action is associated with greater regret than inaction.