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Decoy Effect, Anticipated Regret, and Preferences for Work-Family Benefits

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Abstract

Attracting talent is one of the key challenges for organizations, and offering attractive work-family benefits plays an increasingly important role in succeeding at this challenge. However, behavioral decision theory suggests that when choosing among job offers with different work-family benefits, individuals may fall prey to a decoy effect and this effect may be mediated through anticipated regret. This effect occurs when preferences are influenced by a normatively irrelevant decoy option that is clearly inferior to one of the other options in the choice set, but not the other (i.e., “asymmetrically dominated”). Across two studies, we investigated preferences for two important types of work-family benefits: flexible work arrangements (FWA) and dependent care support (DCS). We predicted and found a decoy effect: preferences for jobs with these benefits were influenced by the presence of a normatively irrelevant decoy option. That is, preferences shifted towards either the FWA option or the DCS option depending on which option the decoy targeted (i.e., the option that asymmetrically dominated the decoy). The effects held over and above variables related to individuals’ work and family situations and values, including role centrality. Moreover, we found that anticipated regret mediated the effect of the decoy option on benefit preferences.

Keywords: anticipated regret; decoy effect; role centrality; work-family benefits; work-family decisions

Practitioner Points

- Organizations can use decoy options with relatively inferior (i.e., dominated) job benefits as an implicit influence tactic to influence applicant job preferences.
- Using this approach is only legitimate if it has a factual basis and recruiters need to take ethical aspects of such practices into consideration.
- Individuals need to be aware that when normatively irrelevant cues such as decoy options affect their decision-making process, their choices may be biased.
- By noticing decoy options and influence attempts of recruiters, individuals can ensure that their choices reflect their values, not contextual factors.

Introduction

A recent survey showed that 95% of Americans would base their decision to accept a job offer on the job's benefits (Harris Interactive, 2012). As such, the need for talent demands that organizations offer a variety of work-family benefits, giving employees more autonomy in determining where, when, and how they conduct work activities and allowing them to provide better care for their family members. This is certainly good news for job seekers and current employees. However, given that the specific benefits offered tend to vary across jobs and organizations, job seekers are faced with difficult decisions in which they need to compare different benefits – such as flexible work arrangements versus dependent care support – against each other. Drawing on behavioral decision theory, we predict that such decisions are influenced by a contextual decision bias referred to as decoy effect.

In the decoy effect (also known as asymmetric dominance or attraction effect; Huber, Payne, & Puto, 1982) a *decoy option* increases preference for the *target option* by which it is asymmetrically dominated even though, according to the principles of logic and rationality, the decoy should have no effect on preferences. To illustrate, imagine that an applicant is choosing between two jobs that are equivalent to each other in all aspects (such as pay, location, and advancement opportunities) except for the benefits that are offered. The first job (Job A) comes with impressive dependent care support (DCS) benefits. The employer offers 12-week paid parental leave, educational assistance for employees and their family, free on-site daycare centers and a health clinic for employees and their family. However, Job A has rather modest flexible work arrangement (FWA) benefits that do not allow for telecommuting, job sharing, and flexible hours. In contrast, the second job (Job B) offers a rather impressive array of FWA benefits. Employees are encouraged to work from anywhere they want and are allowed to work at hours that are convenient to them. The company also has a job sharing program that offers additional flexibility. However, the company's DCS offering is rather weak, providing no paid parental

leave, childcare/eldercare assistance, or family educational subsidy. Now, the job applicant receives a third job offer (Job C). Job C has FWA benefits that are as weak as the FWA benefits offering in Job A. However, Job C's DCS benefits, while not as impressive as the DCS benefits in Job A (e.g., without the dependent educational benefits available in Job A), are superior to the DCS benefits in Job B. Does this new job offer (Job C), which is clearly inferior to Job A, impact the relative preference between Job A and Job B? Job C, in this choice set, is considered a decoy option because it is asymmetrically dominated by Job A (the decoy targets Job A). In contrast, Job B does not dominate Job C (the decoy option) because it is only better with respect to FWA, but not DCS.

In the decoy effect, depending on whether the decoy option targets one or the other option, preferences shift towards these options, respectively. Specifically, the decoy effect would predict that the presence of Job C may increase the preference for Job A over Job B. These results are illogical according to the normative principle of regularity (Luce, 1959): adding a dominated option should have no effect on choices among non-dominated alternatives within a given choice set (Job A and Job B). Despite their apparent irrationality, decoy effects have been documented across a variety of domains, from consumer choice (Simonson, 1989) to workplace decisions (Highhouse, 1996; Tenbrunsel & Diekmann, 2002). However, no study has examined the effect of decoy options within the context of choosing among job options with differing benefits. This is an important omission given the importance of various benefits for job seekers. Given employees' awareness and desire for work-life balance, work-family benefits may be particularly important for job seekers (Casper & Buffardi, 2004) and are consequently the focus of our current research.

Our research contributes to both the human resources literature on job and benefits preferences and the behavioral decision making literature on decoy effects. First, we advance emerging research on work-family decision-making which has often, at least implicitly, assumed

that individuals are rational decision-makers whose choices reflect careful analysis, logical principles, and utility maximization (e.g., Li, Mai, & Bagger, 2017; Powell & Greenhaus, 2006, 2012). While this approach is informative, the current research suggests that heuristic and emotional processes may also play a critical role in work-family decision making. We shed light on this possibility by examining whether individuals' preferences for job options with different work-family benefits are affected by irrelevant context factors (i.e., decoy options). As a more robust test of our prediction, we examine the influence of decoy options beyond that of variables related to individuals' work and family situations and work/family centrality, a life value posited to impact job choice based on the notion of inherent preferences (e.g., Honeycutt & Rosen, 1997; Wayne & Casper, 2012).

Second, our study identifies a novel psychological mechanism underlying decoy effects. Several explanations of the effect have been suggested, including range-frequency mechanisms (Parducci, 1995), loss aversion (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991), and emergent-value models (Pettibone & Wedell, 2000). While these explanations vary considerably, a notable commonality is the absence of emotional processes potentially involved in the decoy effect. Drawing on decision justification theory (Connolly & Zeelenberg, 2002), which posits that anticipated regret depends on perceived justification, we argue that anticipated regret serves as a mediating variable in the relation between decoy options and preference because decoy options provide justification for choosing the target option. As such, we contribute to the decoy literature by offering an emotional, rather than cognitive, account of the effect.

Theory and Hypotheses

Preferences for Different Types of Job Benefits

Organizations offer a variety of work-family benefits to attract and retain talent. These benefits can be clustered into two bundles based on their purpose (Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005): dependent care support (DCS) and flexible work arrangement

(FWA) programs. DCS programs generally aim at enhancing the well-being of employees' immediate or extended family through, for example, childcare support and paid maternity leave. FWA programs aim at enhancing employees' temporal and spatial flexibility, for example, through telecommuting and flextime. Both types of benefits have the potential to significantly improve employees' ability to balance work and non-work domains. Past research has found that offering these benefits enhances the perceived attractiveness of the organization from the perspective of job applicants (Casper & Buffardi, 2004).

Due to organizational considerations such as cost, resource constraints, strategic intent, and espoused values, most organizations do not offer excellent benefits across the entire spectrum of work-family benefits (Kossek, 2005). A survey conducted by The American Work Life Professional Association (AWLP) in 1999 and 2001, as reported by Kossek (2005), showed significant variations in the types of family-friendly benefits offered. Some programs such as flexible schedule and childcare referrals were offered by over 75% of employers whereas other programs such as paid paternity leave were offered by less than 30% of employers surveyed. These findings are corroborated by a recent national study of employers conducted by SHRM (Matos, Galinsky, & Bond, 2016) showing significant variations in benefit offering across employers. The survey suggested that the cost on employers' time, expertise, and monetary resources played a critical role in the variability of benefit offerings across employers. More direct evidence comes from Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly (2002) who reported a correlation of .10 between FWA and DCS offerings within a sample of 2877 working adults, suggesting that most people received either FWA benefits or DCS benefits but not both (similar results can also be found in Li and Bagger, 2017, who reported a correlation of .13 between FWA and DCS benefits availability among a sample of working adults). Therefore, due to between-organization variation, it is likely that some organizations offer benefit packages that are stronger on FWA and weaker on DCS, whereas other organizations offer benefits packages that are stronger on

DCS and weaker on FWA.

However, empirical research is relatively silent on individuals' preferences for benefit bundles whereby one is stronger on one dimension (such as DCS) and the other is stronger on the other dimension (such as FWA, Kelly et al., 2008). This is in part because past research tended to combine these two types of benefits together and call them "work-family benefits" despite empirical evidence suggesting that FWA and DCS have effects that are unique to each other (Casper & Harris, 2008).

Inherent and Constructed Preferences

Research in the area of behavioral decision making offers two contrasting notions of job seekers' preferences for different types of benefits: Inherent and constructed preferences. The notion of *inherent preferences* is grounded on the fundamental assumption in rational theories of decision making, such as traditional economic theory, that "each individual has stable and coherent preferences" (Rabin, 1998, p. 11). These inherent, pre-existing preferences are then revealed in the process of preference elicitation. The notion of inherent preferences suggests that preferences between different benefits should depend on stable individual characteristics such as personality and life role values (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Simonson, 2008). This view is consistent with research on job choice showing that preferences for jobs are influenced by the fit between individual characteristics and the unique features of the job or the organization (e.g., Sauermann, 2005).

Within the context of preferences for work-family benefits, role centrality appears particularly relevant given its effects on people's work-family experiences (e.g., Bagger & Li, 2012). Role centrality can be defined as the level of importance that is ascribed to a particular life role (such as work and family, Bagger & Li, 2012; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Work and family are considered the two most important domains in most people's life (Mortimer, Lorence, & Kumka, 1986) and recent research shows that the values individuals hold regarding their work

and family roles impact how they manage the work-family interface (Bagger & Li, 2012; Bagger, Li, & Gutek, 2008; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). For example, when work centrality is higher, an individual may use work for self-definition, make personal sacrifices in order to maintain or enhance their work performance, and direct resources towards the work domain. Role centrality also impacts how individuals allocate their time such that higher centrality associated with a particular role is typically related to the decision to spend more time on that role domain (Bagger, Reb, & Li, 2014). Thus, the notion of inherent preferences would suggest that role centrality predicts preferences for work-family benefits.

Constructed Preferences and Decoy Effects

In contrast to the notion of inherent preferences, the notion of *constructed preferences* posits that individuals construct preferences when making a choice. As a result, preferences are susceptible to the influence of (irrelevant) contextual factors. According to Bettman and colleagues (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 2008), people have a “vocabulary of preference primitives” (p. 171) or evaluative elements that are combined to evaluate stimuli. These primitive elements are assembled to form preferences for more complex options in a process of preference construction. In other words, the construction of preferences refers to the process of assembling, often unconsciously, preference primitives into full preferences towards complex options. If so, the influence of stable characteristics should not be sufficient to fully explain individuals’ preferences among different options. While constructed preferences may partly reflect stable internal factors, they are also susceptible to the influence of contextual factors (Bettman et al., 2008). Decoy options provide such contextual cues. As such, it stands to reason that the decoy option could influence preferences among job choice sets with different work-family benefits. This prediction is consistent with Sauermann’s (2005) model of vocational choice that argues that expressed vocational preferences reflect core preferences, situational factors, and random error. Sauermann further argues that situational factors, which include contextual aspects such as

decoy options, play a particularly large role in vocational and job choice as these are “extremely infrequent for an individual and there is a long time lag between the decision and the experience of the decision outcome” (p. 522), making it difficult to develop core, or inherent preferences.

When faced with a choice between one job that is high on the attribute of FWA but low on DCS and another job that is high on DCS but low on FWA, job seekers have to make a trade-off. If they choose the job high on FWA, they can enjoy considerable work flexibility but limited resources that directly support family functioning. If they choose the high DCS job, they gain access to dependent care resources at the cost of work flexibility. Asymmetrical decoy options can provide a contextual reason in the form of “shallow but nice-sounding rationales” (Simonson, 1989, p. 170): Whereas both Job A and Job B have their strengths and weaknesses, at least Job A dominates the decoy option C.

To illustrate, Slaughter, Sinar, and Highhouse (1999) had participants watch videos of three job candidates. Candidate A was stronger in quality but weaker in quantity whereas Candidate B was stronger in quantity but weaker in quality. The third candidate (Candidate C) was the decoy option that was dominated by either Candidate A or Candidate B. These authors found that the presence of a decoy option consistently increased the preference of the option that dominates the decoy (i.e. the target option).

Applying the above reasoning and empirical findings to the present context, we suggest that the decoy option will influence preferences between FWA and DCS options such that the FWA option will be preferred more strongly when it is targeted by the decoy, while the DCS option will be preferred more strongly when it is targeted.

Hypothesis 1: Preferences for FWA and DCS options are influenced by the decoy option, such that a targeted option is preferred more strongly than a non-targeted option.

Moreover, we expect that, and empirically test whether, the effect of the decoy option (representing a constructed preferences account) holds incremental validity over and above role

centrality (representing an inherent preferences account). We state this as a research question.

Research question: Does the decoy effect hold incremental validity over role centrality in explaining the choice between FWA and DCS options?

Anticipated Regret as Mediating Mechanism

Although past research has examined the psychological mechanisms underlying decoy effects, these investigations generally focused on cognitive and psycho-physical mechanisms through which the decoy option influences preferences (Pettibone & Wedell, 2000). These explanations include value-shift models such as explanations based on range-frequency theory (Parducci, 1995) or loss aversion (Simonson & Tversky, 1992; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991), according to which decoy options change the perceived attractiveness of attribute values. Past research has also explained the decoy effect using weight-change models, according to which decoy options change the relative weighing of attributes (e.g., Ariely & Wallsten, 1995; Huber et al., 1982), and emergent-value models, according to which decoy options change the configural relation of the choice set, thereby introducing additional reasons that affect choices (e.g., Pettibone & Wedell, 2000).

In contrast, past research has rarely examined the role of emotions in decoy effects, despite the link between emotions and decision making (e.g., Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson, 2000; Reb, 2008). The emotion that we focus on in the present study is anticipated regret, referred to as “the feeling ... that decision makers imagine or expect they would experience if they were to make a certain decision” (Bagger et al., 2014, p. 305). Regret regulation theory (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007) posits that individuals try to avoid regret because experiencing it is uncomfortable, and that they do so by anticipating possible regret before making a decision. Anticipated regret has been found to influence decisions in domains such as negotiations (Larrick & Boles, 1995) and consumer behavior (Simonson, 1992). As Janis and Mann (1977) argued, anticipated regret is particularly likely to influence decisions that are

important and have no clearly dominating option, conditions often present at the work-family interface (e.g., Mortimer et al., 1986). Indeed, Bagger et al. (2014) found that anticipated regret mediated the relation between employees' work centrality and their preferences for allocating time to work over family.

Anticipated regret can be theoretically linked to decoy effects through justification (Connolly & Reb, 2012; Park & Kim, 2005; Shafir, Simonson, & Tversky, 1993). According to decision justification theory (Connolly & Zeelenberg, 2002), regret depends not only on the severity of the expected negative outcome, but also on the perceived justifiability of the decision. For example, Zeelenberg, van den Bos, van Dijk, and Pieters (2002) showed that a soccer coach who changed his lineup and then lost the next game is expected to feel less regret if the team previously did poorly (justifying the change) than if it did not. Reb and Connolly (2010) found that mothers who based their vaccination decisions for a child on a careful decision process are expected to feel less regret over a poor outcome than mothers using a careless decision process.

Relatedly, Simonson (1989) argued that a possible explanation for the decoy effect is “that it reflects the impact of the added dominated alternative on the ability to justify to oneself and to others a choice of the dominating alternative” (p. 1). Because the decoy provides a reason (even though a normatively shallow one) for preferring the target option, choosing the target option may shield a decision maker from the regret of making a decision he or she perceives as poorly justified. Thus, we expect that the presence of a decoy option will lower anticipated regret for the target option relative to the non-target option and that this lower anticipated regret will lead to a stronger preference for the target option (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007). We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Anticipated regret mediates the effect of the decoy option on preferences for targeted FWA and DCS options.

We conducted two studies to test the hypotheses. To test Hypothesis 1, Study 1a used three samples of participants, with slightly varying study designs, to reduce the possibility that the

findings are limited to a specific sample and design. Study 1b further varied some methodological aspects to test for the robustness of the decoy effect. Study 2 then included anticipated regret and tested both Hypotheses 1 and 2 simultaneously.

STUDY 1A

Method

Participants

For Study 1a, we collected data from three samples. Samples 1 and 2 were both working adult samples recruited via Amazon MTurk and paid for their participation. MTurk is an online platform where studies are posted by researchers and potential participants can freely choose which study to participate in. While Amazon MTurk has become widely accepted as a source from which to recruit research participants, there is relatively less control over the research process as compared to conducting studies in a traditional laboratory setting. Thus, to increase sample diversity, Sample 3 consisted of upper-level management students from a large state university on the West Coast of the United States who participated in exchange for course credits.

To address concerns relating to participant inattentiveness, we followed recommendations to include a screening question to identify inattentive participants (DeSimone, Harms, & DeSimone, 2015; Meade & Craig, 2012). Specifically, in our survey, we asked participants to evaluate the attractiveness of each option. Logically, participants should evaluate the target option as more attractive than the dominated decoy option, because it is the better option by definition. We excluded participants (Sample 1, $n = 46$; Sample 2, $n = 128$; Sample 3, $n = 29$) who didn't follow this logical rule. As Huber, Payne, & Puto (2014, p. 522) point out, "if the dominance is not perceived, the [decoy] effect is unlikely to occur". The final number of participants was 308 (Sample 1, $n = 77$; Sample 2, $n = 152$; Sample 3, $n = 79$).

The demographic characteristics of Samples 1, 2, and 3 were, respectively: mean age of

35.95 ($SD = 12.61$), 36.60 ($SD = 11.96$), and 24.39 ($SD = 5.52$); 42%, 59%, and 66% female; 53%, 65%, and 24% married; 77%, 84%, and 14% were employed at the time of data collection; and the average number of children under the age of 12 was .52 ($SD = 1.05$), .62 ($SD = .97$), and .19 ($SD = .46$). Despite their demographic differences, when conducting the analyses reported below on each sample separately, we found that the results were highly compatible across the three samples. Thus, we only report the results collapsed across samples below.

Procedure and Manipulation

Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of the protagonist who has to make a decision among three job offers (see the Appendix). The scenario first provided some background information of the jobs. Participants were then told that the three positions differed only in their DCS and FWA benefits with examples provided for each (DCS: childcare/eldercare support and paid maternity/paternity leave; FWA: flextime and job sharing). They were informed that after extensive evaluations, they, as protagonists, had arrived at the summary ratings shown in Table 1, with a high rating indicating highly desirable and a low rating highly undesirable.

We manipulated the decoy across two conditions: whether the decoy option targeted the job with better DCS benefits (DCS condition) or the job with better FWA benefits (FWA condition). Participants in the DCS condition were told to review three positions (DCS, FWA, and the decoy option that targeted the DCS option). The DCS option (Job A in Table 1) scored most favourably on DCS benefits (with a rating of 8 on a 1-9 scale) but weakly on FWA benefits (a rating of 2 on a 1-9 scale). For the FWA option (Job B in Table 1), it was the reverse: it scored favourably on FWA benefits (with a rating of 8) but poorly on DCS benefits (with a rating of 2). The decoy in this condition (Job C_A in Table 1) targeted the DCS option and scored more poorly (score of 6) than the DCS option on DCS benefits and equally on FWA benefits (score of 2), while at the same time scored better than the FWA option on DCS benefits but worse on FWA benefits. In contrast, in the FWA condition, while the attribute scores for DCS and FWA options

remained unchanged (from those in the DCS condition), the decoy (Job C_B in Table 1) now targeted the FWA option and scored more poorly than this option on FWA benefits (and equally on DCS benefits) while at the same time scored better than the DCS option on FWA benefits but weaker on DCS benefits.

After the manipulation, participants indicated which job offer they preferred, followed by a short survey assessing the control variables. In Samples 1 and 3, participants completed assessment of their work centrality after the experimental manipulation to prevent the rating process from affecting the interpretation of the scenarios. However, this opens up the possibility that these measures may have been affected by the experimental manipulation. Therefore, in Sample 2, we added a manipulation of assessment order such that half of the participants completed the work centrality measure before the decoy manipulation whereas the other half completed the work centrality measure after the decoy manipulation. Since this order factor did not affect any variables we collapsed across it for the analyses below.

[Insert Table 1 around here]

In addition, to ensure that the results are not limited to specific summary ratings, we varied some of the attributes between Samples 1 and 3 and Sample 2 (see Table 1). In particular, in Sample 2, we changed the attribute values representing FWA to reduce the comparability due to the options' symmetrical attribute values. Samples 1 and 3 had identical study designs with the exception of the sample used (Mturk participants in Sample 1 and students in Sample 3).

Measures

Preferences. Drawing on previous research (e.g., Connolly, Reb, & Kausel, 2013), participants' preference was assessed with one item: "Which company's offer will you accept?" Choice of the DCS option was coded as 0, choice of the FWA option was coded as 1. No participant in this and the other studies in the final data set chose the decoy option.

Work centrality. To address our research question regarding the incremental validity of

the decoy effect, we measured work centrality with Carr, Boyar, and Gregory's (2008) 5-item scale rated on a 5-point scale (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree). A sample item is "Overall, I consider work to be more central to my existence than family." ($\alpha = .90$).

Life situation variables. To further represent inherent preferences, we included several demographic control variables related to participants' life and work situations. Specifically, we controlled for participants' age (in years), sex (0 = female, 1 = male), marital status (0 = not married or co-habiting, 1 = married or co-habiting with partner), number of children under the age of 12, and employment status (0 = not currently employed, 1 = currently employed). In the binary logistic regression analyses employed for all studies, the category coded as zero was used as the reference category. Note that results did not change materially when we excluded the control variables.

Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the study variables are reported in Table 2. These results show that being married, having more children, having lower work centrality, and the decoy option targeting the DCS option all correlated significantly with stronger preferences for the DCS option.

Hypothesis 1 predicted an effect of the decoy option on preferences for DCS and FWA options. To test this hypothesis and also examine whether the decoy manipulation holds incremental validity over work centrality (our research question), we conducted a hierarchical multiple binary logistic regression analysis, including the control variables and work centrality in the first step and the decoy manipulation in the second step as predictors of preference. As hypothesized, the decoy manipulation affected participants' preferences ($B = 1.17, p < .001, Exp(B) = 3.23$, see Table 3; for brevity, only results from the final second step are reported). A chi-square analysis replicated these results, $\chi^2(df = 1) = 21.14, p < .001$, showing that more participants chose the DCS option when it was targeted than when it was not (65 out of 105, or

61.9%) and more participants chose the FWA option when it was targeted than when it was not (133 out of 203, or 76.9%).

[Insert Tables 2 and 3 around here]

Thus, as hypothesized, Study 1a showed a decoy effect for job benefit preferences and provided support for the notion of constructed preferences, over and above the effect of work centrality (providing a positive answer to our research question). However, it is also worth noting that work centrality and having fewer children were significant predictors of preferences in the regression analyses, such that those who were higher on work centrality and those who had fewer children were more likely to choose the FWA option over the DCS option (see Table 3). This serves as a reminder of the role of inherent preferences rooted in personal values, such as role centrality, and personal life circumstances, such as the need to care for children. In other words, it does not seem to be the case – and neither did we argue for it to be so – that contextual factors, such as decoy options, *completely* explain preferences. However, our findings suggest that the decoy option does matter, and job benefits preferences are not entirely explained by personal values and life circumstances. Our findings are consistent with a more balanced account that sees a role for both inherent and constructed preferences.

In Study 1b, we varied several methodological aspects to test for the robustness of the decoy effect found in Study 1a. Specifically, in Study 1b we used a working adult sample with self-reported average weekly working time of 40 hours to complement the MTurk and student samples used in Study 1a. We also added a second attention check screening question that was unrelated to the decision making task, as described below. Further, we measured family centrality, rather than work centrality. Finally, we added a no-decoy control condition to be able to examine whether the decoy effect found in Study 1a is symmetrical or is driven largely by either the decoy targeting the FWA option or the decoy targeting the DCS option.

STUDY 1B

Method

Study 1b largely followed the design, procedure, manipulation, and measures of Study 1a, with the following differences. Participants were working adults, recruited by trained students on the condition that they had to work at least 25 hours per week. Participants' occupations included purchasing agent, lawyer, warehouse supervisor, and office administrator, among others. Their self-reported average working hours were about 40 hours per week. In addition to the screening question used in Study 1a (based on the relative attractiveness of the decoy option and the dominant option), we added a second, more traditional attention check unrelated to the choice set. Specifically, among other items in the survey, we included the following item: "I can run three miles in a minute." We then screened out participants who failed either one of the two screening criteria for a conservative approach to identify inattentive respondents. After removing careless respondents ($n = 76$), the final sample consisted of 134 participants. The mean age was 37.07 ($SD = 12.92$), 60% were female, 66% were married, and the average number of children under the age of 12 was .43 ($SD = .78$).

In order to examine whether the decoy effect was symmetrical, we included a two-option, no-decoy control condition (see Table 1). Thus, Study 1b used a between-subjects design with three conditions (FWA, DCS, and a no-decoy control condition). Preferences and life situation control variables were assessed as in Study 1a. Significance test results did not materially differ when control variables were excluded. Unlike Study 1a, we measured family centrality rather than work centrality for several reasons. First, since work and family are the two most important domains in most people's life (Mortimer et al., 1986), we wanted to test the robustness of the inherent preferences account by assessing the participants' family centrality rather than their work centrality as we did in Study 1a. Second, the work centrality measure used in Study 1a assessed the centrality of work relative to family, thereby assuming that high values in work centrality are equivalent to low values in family centrality, or vice versa (see also Carr et al.,

2008). Recent research however has suggested that work and family centrality may be relatively independent from each other such that individuals do not need to trade off their identification with one role against another (Bagger & Li, 2012). Therefore, we used a centrality measure that assessed the absolute level of family centrality, rather than its relativeness to the centrality of the work role.

Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the study variables are reported in Table 4. We first attempted to replicate Study 1a findings concerning Hypothesis 1. To do so, we conducted a hierarchical binary logistic regression analysis, including the life situation control variables and family centrality in the first step and the decoy manipulation in the second step as predictors of preference. Results revealed a significant overall effect of the decoy manipulation on choices, over and above the control variables ($p < .01$, see Table 5). In addition, higher family centrality predicted a stronger preference for the DCS option ($p < .05$, one-tailed, see Table 5).

Given that we wanted to find out whether the decoy effect was symmetrical we followed up with chi-square analyses comparing the different experimental conditions. The overall chi-square was significant, $\chi^2(df = 2) = 15.07, p = .001$. Comparing more specifically the FWA condition against the control condition showed that significantly more participants chose the FWA option when it was targeted (30 out of 36, or 83.3%) than when there was no decoy option (29 out of 57, or 50.9%), $\chi^2(df = 1) = 10.02, p < .01$. In contrast, we did not find evidence that more participants chose the DCS option when it was targeted (24 out of 41, or 58.5%) than when there was no decoy (28 out of 57, or 49.1%), $\chi^2(df = 1) = .85, p = .36$. Moreover, replicating Study 1a, comparing only the FWA and DCS conditions, significantly more participants chose the FWA option when it was targeted (30 out of 36), whereas more participants chose the DCS option when it was targeted (24 out of 51), $\chi^2(df = 1) = 14.13, p < .001$.

[Insert Tables 4 and 5 around here]

Thus, these results further build on Study 1a by replicating the decoy effect found between the FWA and the DCS condition and showing that the effect is largely driven by the FWA condition. Preferences between the two benefits were well balanced at around 50% each in the no-decoy control condition, representing a very desirable baseline control to test the decoy effect (Huber et al., 2014). This balance shifted only slightly, but not significantly towards the DCS option when it was targeted by the decoy; the balance shifted significantly towards the FWA option when it was targeted by the decoy. A tentative explanation of this effect draws on the idea that strong (inherent) preferences limit the effect of the decoy option (Huber et al., 2014). It could be that, in the comparison between the DCS condition with the control condition, participants who preferred the FWA option preferred it more strongly and thus were unmoved by the decoy targeting the DCS option. In contrast, in the comparison between the FWA condition and the control condition, participants who might have preferred the DCS option may have had a more balanced preference and thus were swayed more by the decoy targeting the FWA option. To explore this possibility empirically, we conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA on participants in the no decoy control condition. Specifically, we tested whether attractiveness ratings for the FWA and DCS options (as within-subjects factor) interacted with participants' choices (as between-subjects factor). Consistent with this account, the interaction was highly significant, $F(1, 65) = 75.06, p < .001$. Participants who chose the FWA option found it much more attractive ($M = 4.79, SD = .41$) than the DCS option ($M = 3.31, SD = .93$; $\text{diff} = 1.48$); whereas participants who chose the DCS option also found it more attractive ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.33$) than the FWA option ($M = 3.25, SD = 1.14$), but the difference was smaller ($\text{diff} = 1.04$).

Overall, Study 1 confirmed the robustness of the decoy effect in benefit preferences across different samples, role centrality measures, and screening criteria. Moreover, the effect held over and above controlling for life situation and role centrality variables. In Study 2, we attempted to again replicate Study 1 findings. More importantly, we included a measure of

anticipated regret to test Hypothesis 2.

STUDY 2

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from MTurk and paid for their participation. We included the same screening question as in Study 1a to identify inattentive respondents. After removing careless respondents ($n = 94$), the final samples consisted of 177 participants. The mean age was 32.89 ($SD = 10.48$), 47% were female, 54% were married, 79% were employed, and the average number of children was .54 ($SD = .91$).

Design, Procedure, Manipulation, and Measures

Study 2 largely followed the design, procedure, manipulation, and measures of Study 1a, with the following differences. First, we included Creyer and Ross' (1999) four-item, five-point scale (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree) to measure anticipated regret. Participants were asked, "assuming that you chose [a particular option] and then an undesirable outcome followed, to what extent do you think you might experience the following thoughts and emotions?" A sample item is: "I would regret my choice." Preferences, work centrality, and control variables were assessed as in Study 1a. Note that all significance test results held whether including or excluding the control variables.

Second, given the significant findings related to work centrality in Study 1a, we included a between-subjects manipulation of work centrality in addition to measuring work centrality. In this manipulation, we asked participant after reading the job descriptions and before making a choice "to take a moment to think about how important [family/work] is to you." We then asked participants write down "why [family/work] is important to you and how your [family/work] influences the way you view yourself as a person" and how their decision may influence their family or work (different conditions in parentheses). However, manipulation checks revealed

that the manipulation was not successful in increasing work centrality in participants. Thus, we decided not to report on the manipulation in the analyses below but instead focus on the measured work centrality, as in Study 1a. We took several steps to ensure that the work centrality manipulation did not confound the results. First, we used a 2 x 2 factorial design to make the manipulation orthogonal and independent of the manipulation of the decoy option. As expected, the two factors were not significantly correlated, $r = .02$, *ns*. Second, we found that the work centrality manipulation did not affect any of the variables in this study, including anticipated regret, preference, and measured work centrality. Third, and most importantly, all significance test results reported below replicated when including the work centrality manipulation in the analyses as a control variable. Thus, while the manipulation of work centrality was not successful, we can be confident that it did not confound other parts of the study and can proceed with our hypotheses tests.

Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the study variables are reported in Table 6. We first attempted to replicate Study 1 findings concerning Hypothesis 1. Results of a hierarchical binary logistic regression, with the decoy manipulation entered in a second step after the control variables and work centrality, revealed that the decoy manipulation again affected preferences in the expected direction ($B = 1.46$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 4.30$, see Table 7; for brevity, only results of the final second step analysis are reported). A chi-square analysis replicated these results, $\chi^2(df = 1) = 19.33$, $p < .001$, showing that more participants chose the DCS option when it was targeted than when it was not (43 out of 83, or 51.8%) and more participants chose the FWA option when it was targeted than when it was not (75 out of 94, or 79.8%). These results replicate Study 1 and find that the decoy option influenced preferences over and above individual characteristics. Further, higher work centrality again predicted a stronger preference for the FWA option ($B = .79$, $p < .01$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 2.20$, see Table 7).

[Insert Tables 6 and 7 around here]

We next examined whether anticipated regret acted as a mediator for the influence of the decoy option on preferences. Using Hayes' PROCESS macro and including all control variables as covariates, we found that when entered simultaneously, regret for choosing the DCS option ($B = 2.29, p < .01$), regret for choosing the FWA option ($B = -2.39, p < .01$), and the decoy manipulation ($B = 1.18, p < .05$) all significantly predicted participants' preferences (see Table 8). The total effect of the decoy manipulation on preferences was significant ($B = 1.58, p < .01$). The indirect effects of the decoy manipulation via anticipated regret for the DCS option ($B = .76, p < .05$) and via anticipated regret for the FWA option ($B = 1.13, p < .01$) were both significant (and a contrast between the two indirect effects showed that they were not significantly different from each other). These findings provide support for Hypothesis 2.

As work centrality significantly predicted benefit preferences in Studies 1a and 2, we decided on an exploratory basis to also examine a potential mediation of this relation through anticipated regret. Results (see Table 9) show that when entered simultaneously, only the two anticipated regret measures predicted preferences whereas the direct relation with work centrality became non-significant in the presence of the mediators. The total effect of work centrality on preferences was $.90 (p < .01)$ and the indirect effects of work centrality via anticipated regret for the DCS option ($B = .85, p < .01$) and via anticipated regret for the FWA option ($B = .61, p < .05$) were both significant.

[Insert Tables 8 and 9 around here]

Overall, the results of Study 2 replicate and significantly extend Study 1 findings. Both the decoy manipulation and role centrality again predicted benefit preferences. Moreover, the relations between both variables and preferences were mediated by anticipated regret.

General Discussion

Given that job offers often differ in the quality of the benefits provided, how do

individuals choose between jobs with non-dominated benefits? Drawing on behavioral decision theory (e.g., Huber et al., 1982), we examined the influence of normatively irrelevant decoy options and the mediating role of anticipated regret on job benefit preferences. Across two studies, we found that decoy options reliably shifted preferences towards the target option (i.e., the option asymmetrically dominating the decoy), even when controlling for life situation and role centrality. These findings are consistent with the notion of preferences being constructed during the preference elicitation process by relying on contextual factors (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993). Moreover, we found that anticipated regret mediated the effect of the decoy option on preferences, suggesting that emotional processes of regret regulation are important for contextual influences on decision making, such as decoy effects.

Interestingly, role centrality, an important life role value, also predicted benefit preferences such that the more central the work (family) role was to a participant's identity, the stronger the preference for the job with attractive FWA (DCS) benefits. As such, our studies suggest that both contextual factors, in the form of the decoy option, and personal factors, in the form of role centrality (and also relevant demographic characteristics related to individuals' life situations), influence job choices. The picture painted by our studies is thus a balanced account of individuals' benefit preferences (i.e., based neither purely on inherent nor purely on contextual cues and constructed preferences, but a mix of both). Importantly, anticipated regret also mediated the relation between work centrality and preferences, highlighting the mediating role of regret avoidance across these different decision antecedents and processes.

Theoretical Implications

We believe that this research makes several noteworthy contributions. First, several studies have shown that employers stand to benefit from offering work-family benefits given that they have been linked to higher levels of employee satisfaction, retention, job performance, and OCBs (e.g., Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999; Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013;

Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). However, much less is known about whether and how individuals are attracted to different benefits. Although past research suggests that such preferences for work-family benefits may be determined by inherent individual characteristics such as role centrality (e.g., Carlson & Kacmar, 2000), we found that the decoy option reliably shifted preferences towards the target option (whether FWA or DCS). These results suggest that individuals may not always, or even typically, have well-formed, stable, and consistent inherent preferences for work-family benefits. Instead, individuals at least partly *construct* their preferences for such benefits during the choice process using normatively irrelevant contextual cues. Thus, our research responds to Dalal et al.'s (2010) suggestion that insights from the decision making literature hold significant promise for areas of organizational behaviour. By showing how decision making constructs such as the decoy effect are manifest in peoples' construction of preferences for work-family benefits, we contribute towards the integration of these two important fields. Future research could examine other contextual factors influencing preference construction in benefit preferences and job choice more generally. Such situational factors could include other choice set configurations such as the compromise effect (where the decision makers choose the compromise option, such as a benefit package with medium FWA and medium DCS benefits) and factors related to the evaluability and comparability of the options, such as joint versus separate evaluation (i.e., whether decision makers evaluate each job or benefit package separately or comparatively, Sauerermann, 2005; Simonson, 1989).

Second, our research contributes to the theoretical understanding of decoy effects by examining the role of anticipated regret as a mediating process. In so doing, it lends further support to the emergent value account of decoy effects, which highlights the role of perceived justification (Pettibone & Wedell, 2000). In finding lower anticipated regret for the target option, our findings also provide an interesting juxtaposition to Connolly et al. (2013) who showed that making regret salient (by having participants think about the regret they might experience as a

result of their decision) reduces the decoy effect. This contrast can be understood by recognizing that assessing anticipated regret is fundamentally different from making regret salient because only the latter is expected to induce more careful decision processing (Janis & Mann, 1977; Reb, 2008). This raises the interesting possibility of examining both regret salience and anticipated regret in future research on work-family decisions and job choice. More broadly, our research highlights the need to consider emotional processes in addition to cognitive ones in understanding preference construction, job choice, and work-family decision making.

Third, past research has rarely examined “the psychological mechanisms through which family-friendly benefits exert their effects on recruitment outcomes” (Casper & Buffardi, 2004, p. 393). Even when mediating mechanisms are considered, past research has mainly focused on cognitive processes such as anticipated organizational support (Casper & Buffardi, 2004) or perceived organizational prestige and anticipated role performance (Wayne & Casper, 2012). We contribute to the literature by showing that anticipated regret plays a significant role in individuals’ consideration of the work-family benefits offered. It appears that individuals do not just make a decision based on cognitive cost-benefit analyses, but also based on how they may be emotionally impacted by their decision. The lack of attention to the role of emotions is considered “a critical gap” in the work-family literature (Livingston & Judge, 2008, p. 2007) and existing research on the role of emotions at the work-family interface has focused on a reactive rather than proactive response, showing that individuals react emotionally to the work-family dynamics they experience (e.g., Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006; Poposki, 2011). Our study shows that there is considerable promise in examining the proactive strategies that individuals use to hedge against the possible emotional fallouts resulting from their choices (Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008). More broadly, considering emotions may also help increase our understanding of how discrete, everyday work-family decisions are made (Bagger et al., 2014).

Finally, it is also important to recognize the role of individual characteristics related to

role centrality. Across these studies, role centrality was positively related to preference between FWA and DCS. These results suggest that for individuals whose work was more central than family, choosing the FWA benefit would allow them to allocate time between work and non-work domains with some flexibility while at the same time remaining fully committed to work as desired. In contrast, choosing the DCS benefit would benefit those for whom the family domain was more central to their identity. This finding is consistent with the notion of inherent preferences and suggests that benefit preferences are partly constructed and partly based on individual characteristics such as role centrality. The finding challenges the assumption that all work-family benefits are equally attractive from the perspective of the job applicant (Kelly et al., 2008). Instead, individuals' choices appear to be influenced by the life role that they highly value. Our findings also raise questions about the tendency of past research to either focus on just one benefit bundle (either FWA *or* DCS) or group them together in the examination of how offering "work-family benefits" in general influences organizational attractiveness (Glass & Finley, 2002). Instead, our research supports the notion that FWA and DCS are qualitatively different (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). In light of these findings, we echo Rau and Hyland's (2002) premonition that researchers should not assume that offering any work-family benefits will automatically increase the appeal of an organization.

Practical Implications

Past research has shown that decoy options can be used as an implicit influence tactic: Introducing a decoy that targets a particular option increases the likelihood of this option being chosen (Slaughter, Kausel, & Quiñones, 2011). Such practices appear to be common in the field of marketing. Integrating this idea with the present results suggests that organizations may be able to benefit from having recruiters direct the attention of job seekers towards relatively inferior (i.e., dominated) benefits offered by other organizations in the same industry (i.e., the decoy), thereby enhancing the appeal of the hiring organization. For example, a recruiter for an

investment bank can point out that while the company offers FWA benefits such as flextime that are normative in the banking industry, it also offers DCS benefits unavailable in other companies such as reproductive assistance. Of course, such comparisons need to have a factual basis and recruiters need to take ethical aspects of such practices into consideration.

For individuals seeking jobs, our research highlights the danger of being exposed to decoy options in the choice set. To the extent that individuals would like their decisions to be driven by attributes aligned with their values (Powell & Greenhaus, 2012), individuals make suboptimal choices when normatively irrelevant cues such as decoy options affect their decision-making process. Therefore, individuals need to be aware of the makeup of the work-family benefit options in the choice set, recruiter attempts to frame choice sets, and the emotions they experience or anticipate when considering the available options. Individuals could also try to think about the regret they might experience depending on which option they choose, as doing so has been found to reduce the decoy effect (Connolly et al., 2013).

Limitations and Future Research

As with most research, our studies have both strengths and limitations. To reduce potential confounds and strengthen internal validity, we decided to opt for an experimental design. Using a scenario methodology allowed us to equate job offers on all dimensions other than those of theoretical interest (i.e., FWA and DCS benefits) as well as introduce an unambiguous decoy option. It should be noted that this approach is the methodology of choice in studies of the decoy effect (e.g., Highhouse, 1996; Huber et al., 1982; Pettibone & Wedell, 2000) and that decoy effects found in scenario studies have been replicated in field settings (e.g., Doyle, O'Connor, Reynolds, & Bottomley, 1999). Nevertheless, despite our use of several working adult samples, caution should be exercised before generalizing the findings beyond the present context.

Relatedly, the present studies were designed to provide a test of theoretical predictions

and mechanisms. We are to some extent reassured by the replication of findings across different samples and the inclusion of relevant control variables. Nevertheless, we have to admit that the current studies were limited to specific intentionally created choice sets. Thus, future studies should build on the present research and study the prevalence of decoy effects in actual job choices with differing benefits and continue to examine mediating mechanisms including anticipated regret. Such research would be more suitable to examine the extent to which choice sets involving asymmetrical dominance (decoy) relations among options exist in the real world and whether job seekers are aware of the presence of asymmetrically dominated options in such choice sets.

Finally, in the present studies anticipated regret and preferences were measured at about the same time raising potential questions about causal ordering. While our statistical analyses were consistent with our hypotheses of anticipated regret mediating the relation between the decoy option and preferences (rather than preferences affecting anticipated regret), to bolster confidence in these findings, future studies, in particular field studies, should spread out the measurement of independent, mediating, and dependent variables.

Despite these limitations, we believe that the present research has interesting theoretical and practical implications and suggests worthwhile directions for future research on how individuals form preferences for different job benefits. Given the relevance of benefits for most job seekers, more research on how such benefits impact job seekers' process of making job choice decisions is urgently needed.

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Appendix

Imagine yourself being in the job market looking for a job. You are interested in an entry-level management/supervisory position. Following extensive job search and interviews, you have received an offer from a company whose profile is described below.

This company is one of the world's leading retailers operating in 45 of the 50 states in the United States, South America, and Asia. Considered one of the most innovative companies in the industry, the company has set itself apart from other companies by using the latest technology to control its logistic cost without sacrificing the quality and variety of products and services offered to its customers.

The company is committed to promoting work-life balance among its employees. The company provides a variety of family-oriented programs and flexibility initiatives that offer alternative work arrangements. Note, however, that the features of these programs and initiatives vary depending on the position, as these are determined by the regional headquarters. The details of these programs and initiatives are presented below.

The company offers you the choice of three positions located in different regions within the United States from which you will need to choose one. The three positions are rather similar to each other in their profile; they offer the same base salary of \$45,000 a year; they are all at the same level in the company with very similar tasks and responsibilities. Also, while the locations differ for the three positions, you find these locations about equally attractive.

You evaluate two sets of HR programs that these three positions offer. The first set consists of their family-oriented programs which include childcare/eldercare support (money that employees can use to pay for their children's daycare expenses or nursing home expenses for their parents), paid maternity/paternity leave, family-based insurance plan, etc. The second set consists of their flexibility initiatives which include flextime (employees have the flexibility to decide when their work day starts and when their work day ends), compressed work week (employees can compress their standard 40-hour work week into a three- or four-day work week), and job sharing (employees can split their job with another employee), etc.

After extensive evaluations, below are the ratings you assign to the family-oriented programs and the flexibility initiatives of each of these three positions. You assign a rating ranging from 1 to 9, with 1 referring to very bad, or highly unfavorable, and 9 referring to very good, or highly favorable. Please note that you consider the positions to be equally attractive on all other aspects. As such, you only base your choice on your ratings of the family-oriented programs and the flexibility initiatives.

Table 1

Experimental Manipulations

		Study 1a: Sample 1		Study 1a: Sample 2		Study 1a: Sample 3		Study 1b		Study 2	
Job Option		DCS	FWA	DCS	FWA	DCS	FWA	DCS	FWA	DCS	FWA
DCS condition	A	8	2	8	34	8	2	8	2	8	2
	B	2	8	3	85	2	8	2	8	2	8
	C _A	6	2	6	34	6	2	6	2	6	2
FWA condition	A	8	2	8	34	8	2	8	2	8	2
	B	2	8	3	85	2	8	2	8	2	8
	C _B	2	6	3	64	2	6	2	6	2	6
No-decoy condition	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	8	2	--	--
	B	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	8	--	--

Notes. DCS: dependent care support. FWA: flexible work arrangements. Options C_A and C_B are decoy options targeting Option A or Option B respectively. Only Study 1b included a no-decoy condition. In Study 1a (Samples 1 and 3), and Study 2, participants were informed that for both attributes, values ranged from 1 (very bad/highly unfavorable) to 9 (very good/highly favorable). In Study 1a (Sample 2), the FWA attribute ranged from 1 (very bad/highly unfavorable) to 100 (very good/highly favorable).

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Inter-Correlations (Study 1a)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Marital status	.52	.50							
2. Number of children	.48	.90	.40**						
3. Age	33.31	12.04	.18**	.07					
4. Gender	.44	.50	-.10	-.10	-.01				
5. Employment status	.80	.40	.09	.07	-.07	.14*			
6. Work centrality	2.13	.84	-.22**	-.15**	-.09	.22**	-.00	(.90)	
7. Decoy manipulation	.56	.50	.04	-.01	.08	.04	.07	.09	
8. Preference	.66	.48	-.16**	-.25**	.08	.07	.04	.29**	.26**

Notes. N = 308. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Marital status: 0 = no partner, 1 = married/with a partner. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male.

Employment status: 0 = unemployed, 1 = employed. Decoy manipulation: 0 = decoy targeting DCS, 1 = decoy targeting FWA.

Preference: 0 = DCS option, 1 = FWA option.

Table 3

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Preferences (Study 1a)

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp (B)
Intercept	-2.31**	.69	11.15	.10
Marital status	-.40	.31	1.70	.67
Number of children	-.53**	.17	10.09	.59
Age	.03*	.01	4.49	1.03
Gender	-.17	.28	.35	.85
Employment status	.40	.34	1.42	1.50
Work centrality	.86**	.20	18.58	2.36
Decoy manipulation	1.17**	.28	18.04	3.23

Notes. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. For categorical variables, the first category was set as reference.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Inter-Correlations (Study 1b)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Marital status	.66	.48						
2. Number of children	.43	.78	.21*					
3. Age	37.07	12.92	.28**	-.06				
4. Gender	.40	.49	.08	.08	.15			
5. Family centrality	4.19	.74	.23**	.19*	-.09	-.07	(.90)	
6. Decoy manipulation	-.04	.76	-.06	-.03	.27**	.04	-.03	
7. Preference	.57	.50	.04	-.03	.20*	.04	-.16	.32**

Notes. N = 308. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Marital status: 0 = no partner, 1 = married/with a partner. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male. Decoy manipulation: -1 = decoy targeting DCS, 0 = no decoy, 1 = decoy targeting FWA. Preference: 0 = DCS option, 1 = FWA option.

Table 5

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Preferences (Study 1 b)

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp (B)
Intercept	1.73	1.33	1.70	5.64
Marital status	.29	.44	.42	1.33
Number of children	.02	.25	.004	1.02
Age	.02	.02	.94	1.02
Gender	.04	.39	.01	1.04
Family centrality	-.52	.28	3.38	.59
Decoy manipulation	.86**	.27	10.14	2.36

Notes. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. For categorical variables, the first category was set as reference.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Inter-Correlations (Study 2)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Marital status	.54	.50									
2. Number of children	.54	.90	.43**								
3. Age	32.89	10.48	.37**	.18*							
4. Gender	.53	.50	-.18*	-.21**	-.25**						
5. Employment status	.79	.41	.02	-.12	.00	.14*					
6. Work centrality	2.10	.87	-.32**	-.40**	-.23**	.23**	.11	(.92)			
7. Decoy manipulation	.53	.50	.02	-.04	-.06	.00	-.02	.16*			
8. Preference	.65	.48	-.20**	-.22**	-.05	.05	.02	.33**	.33**		
9. Anticipated regret choosing DCS	2.92	.98	-.14*	-.14*	-.14*	.11	.03	.34**	.18*	.43**	
10. Anticipated regret choosing FWA	2.58	.91	.08	.16*	-.03	.04	.06	-.23**	-.26**	-.47**	-.08

Notes. N = 177. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Marital status: 0 = no partner, 1 = married/with a partner. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male. Employment status: 0 = unemployed, 1 = employed. Decoy manipulation: 0 = decoy targeting DCS, 1 = decoy targeting FWA. Preference: 0 = DCS option, 1 = FWA option.

Table 7

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Preferences (Study 2)

	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp (B)
Intercept	-1.64	.98	2.84	.19
Marital status	-.69	.44	2.44	.50
Number of children	-.17	.22	.56	.85
Age	.02	.02	.72	1.02
Gender	-.18	.39	.21	.84
Employment status	.05	.44	.01	1.05
Work centrality	.79**	.27	8.28	2.20
Decoy manipulation	1.46**	.37	15.69	4.30

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 8

Mediation of Decoy Manipulation–Preference Relation through Anticipated Regret (Study 2)

	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>DV</i>	<i>DV</i>
	Regret (DCS)	Regret (FWA)	Preference	Preference
Marital status	-.14	.12	-.86*	-.42
Number of children	-.07	.15	-.35	-.24
Age	-.01	-.01	.01	.00
Gender	-.12	-.03	.02	-.04
Employment status	.04	.16	.13	.36
Decoy manipulation	.33*	-.47**	1.58**	1.18*
Anticipated regret choosing DCS				2.29**
Anticipated regret choosing FWA				-2.39**

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 9

Mediation of Work Centrality–Preference Relation through Anticipated Regret (Study 2)

	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>DV</i>	<i>DV</i>
	Regret (DCS)	Regret (FWA)	Preference	Preference
Marital status	-.04	.02	-.48	-.29
Number of children	.02	.10	-.16	-.11
Age	-.01	-.01	.01	-.00
Gender	-.04	-.09	.23	.14
Employment status	-.02	.21	-.07	.14
Work centrality	.37**	-.25*	.90**	.50
Anticipated regret choosing DCS				2.28**
Anticipated regret choosing FWA				-2.48**

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.