

The Role of Multitasking on Consumer Creativity and Task Enjoyment



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to examine how different types of tasks in multitasking behavior affect consumer creativity and task enjoyment. We found that multitasking inhibits creativity and task enjoyment.

INTRODUCTION

- Recently there has been an increase in consumer multitasking, especially with media. With the development of new technology, consumers have a tendency to perform more than one task at a time (multitasking). Multitasking is highly demanding on attentional capacity; therefore it divides up the limited resources, resulting in the inhibition of one of the tasks. For example, studies have found that watching television while reading inhibited comprehension (Armstrong and Greenberg, 1990).
- There are two types of tasks which consumers engage in: cognitive and perceptual (Lavie, 1995; Lavie and Tsal, 1994). Task type can affect information processing, the ability to think about new ideas, as well as problem solving skills.
- Problem solving is a form of creativity (Guilford, 1950). Consumers sometimes encounter situations in which they need to use their creativity to alter a product in order to enhance its performance or appearance, or even to create a new product (Burroughs et al., 2008).
- A few studies have looked at the effects of multitasking on information processing (Voorveld, 2011; Le et al., 2012) and human performance (Pashler, 1994). However, no existing research has looked at the effects of multitasking on consumers' creativity. This research will add to the body of existing literature on multitasking as it pertains to creativity as well.

METHOD: EXPERIMENT

Three Conditions:

- Single Task
- Cognitive Task
- Perceptual Task

Part One:

Single Task

- Participants had to complete an idea generation task in which they had to generate creative uses for a newspaper.
- Given a total of 5 minutes to complete task

Cognitive Task

- Participants had to complete the idea generation task at the same time as the secondary cognitive-task which had participants complete basic math computations.
- Given a total of 10 minutes to complete both tasks

Perceptual Task

- Participants had to complete the idea generation task at the same time as the secondary perceptual-task which had participants copy shapes in the left-hand column to the spaces on the right.
- Given a total of 10 minutes to complete both tasks

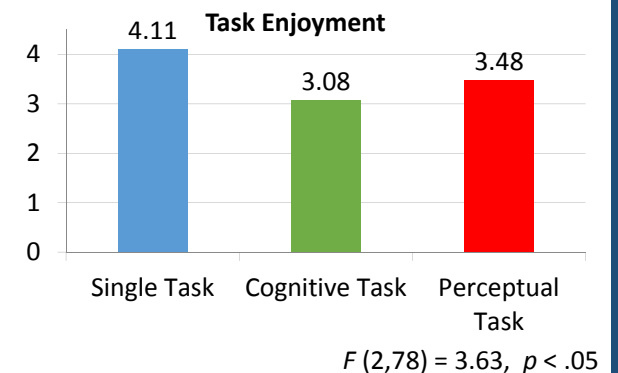
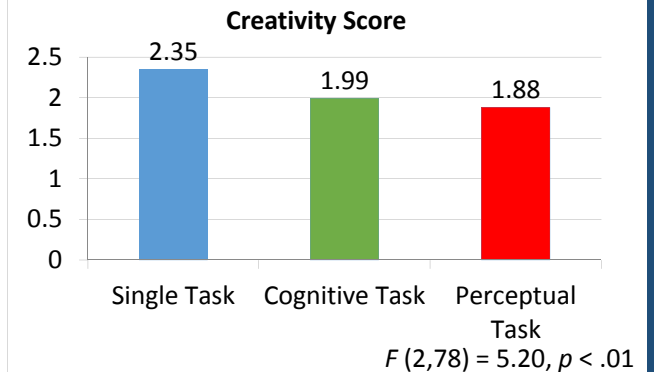
Part Two:

- Participants completed a qualtrics survey assessing task enjoyment as well as demographics.

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RESULTS



- The results indicate that those in the cognitive- and perceptual-task conditions generated a lower creativity score than those in the single-task condition. From these findings, it can be inferred that multitasking inhibits creativity and task enjoyment.

FUTURE RESEARCH

These findings have heightened the research on this topic and have many implications for further research regarding the underlying reasons as to why these specific effects are seen and crucial marketing strategy research.