

## The Effects of Information Type and Thinking Purpose on Dilution Effect

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The dilution effect refers to the phenomenon that when diagnostic information is diluted with nondiagnostic information, our judgment or inference will become less extreme. The present study examined the effects of information type and thinking purpose on the dilution effect.

Experiment 1 aimed at exploring the possible impact of different nondiagnostic information types on the dilution effect. We manipulated typicality and typical diagnosticity of the nondiagnostic information independently. Seventy-eight subjects were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: (1) the undiluted condition: receiving diagnostic information only, (2) the dilution condition: receiving diagnostic information and nondiagnostic information which is typical and low in typical diagnosticity, (3) the dilution condition: receiving diagnostic information and nondiagnostic information which is atypical and low in typical diagnosticity, (4) the dilution condition: receiving diagnostic information and nondiagnostic information which is typical and high in typical diagnosticity, (5) the dilution condition: receiving diagnostic information and nondiagnostic information which is atypical and high in typical di-

agnosticity. The results indicated that when the typical diagnosticity of the information is high, then regardless of the typicality, the dilution effect occurred. On the other hand, we also found that if the information is typical, then no matter the typical diagnosticity is high or low, the dilution effect also appeared. In other words, the nondiagnostic information, only when it is atypical and low in typical diagnosticity, would have no impact on our judgment.

Experiment 2 was focused on the effects of thinking purpose on the dilution effect. Subjects were randomly assigned to a 6 (thinking purpose: value-relevant involvement vs. consider-the-opposite vs. explaining to others vs. impression-relevant involvement vs. being unbiased vs. none)  $\times$  2 (information condition: undiluted vs. diluted) factorial design. The result showed that only the consider-the-opposite strategy could eliminate the dilution effect, and other thinking purposes didn't have the same impact. Further implications were also discussed.

**Keywords:** *dilution effect, typical diagnosticity, typicality, consider the-opposite, involvement, accountability.*

