

Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Moe – I can never decide on a Netflix show!

Sampling Mindset: Antecedents and Consequences

Background & Research Overview

54% of global internet traffic in 2021 was video streaming, with YouTube, Netflix, Facebook and TikTok making up more than a quarter of it¹. Households with connected TVs in the UK had an average consumption of 3 hours 30 minutes per day².

With the multiplicity of streaming platforms, and the profusion of content choices on each platform, consumers routinely face choice overload, search fatigue and decision paralysis. With the staggering consumption of online video, there is surprisingly scant research in marketing on studying this decision environment and the consumer psychology that underlies the chronic (in)decision.

From Netflix to Amazon, Tinder to DoorDash, consumers now face steroidal choice environments characterised by (i) limitless assortment size, (ii) decision reversibility (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017), (iii) non-alignable assortment types (Gourville & Soman, 2005), (iv) heterogenous preferences (Chernev, 2003), and (v) generous preview of alternatives.

How do consumers navigate these novel choice environments?

We study the antecedents of the **sampling mindset**; a mindset characterized by high indecision, high counterfactual salience, and swift goal dispersion (or low goal honing) in these environments that are exaggerations of classic choice overload (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000) situations.

What are the consequences of making choices with a sampling mindset?

We study significant changes to cognitive and affective processes that can have downstream effects on the well-being, behaviour and decision making in other spheres of consumers lives.

Research Overview

This research combines an exploratory study using a mix of constructs from prior literature and proposed novel constructs of motivation to identify a typology of samplers in video consumers, with an empirical study to investigate changes to cognitive processes like convergent thinking and fluid intelligence.

Study A: Sampling Mindset Measurement

MTurk survey(N=249; M=140 | F=109; M_{age} = 36y | United States)

The survey asked questions about the **Consumer experience of online video consumption across devices and platforms** and was divided in the following 5 sections:

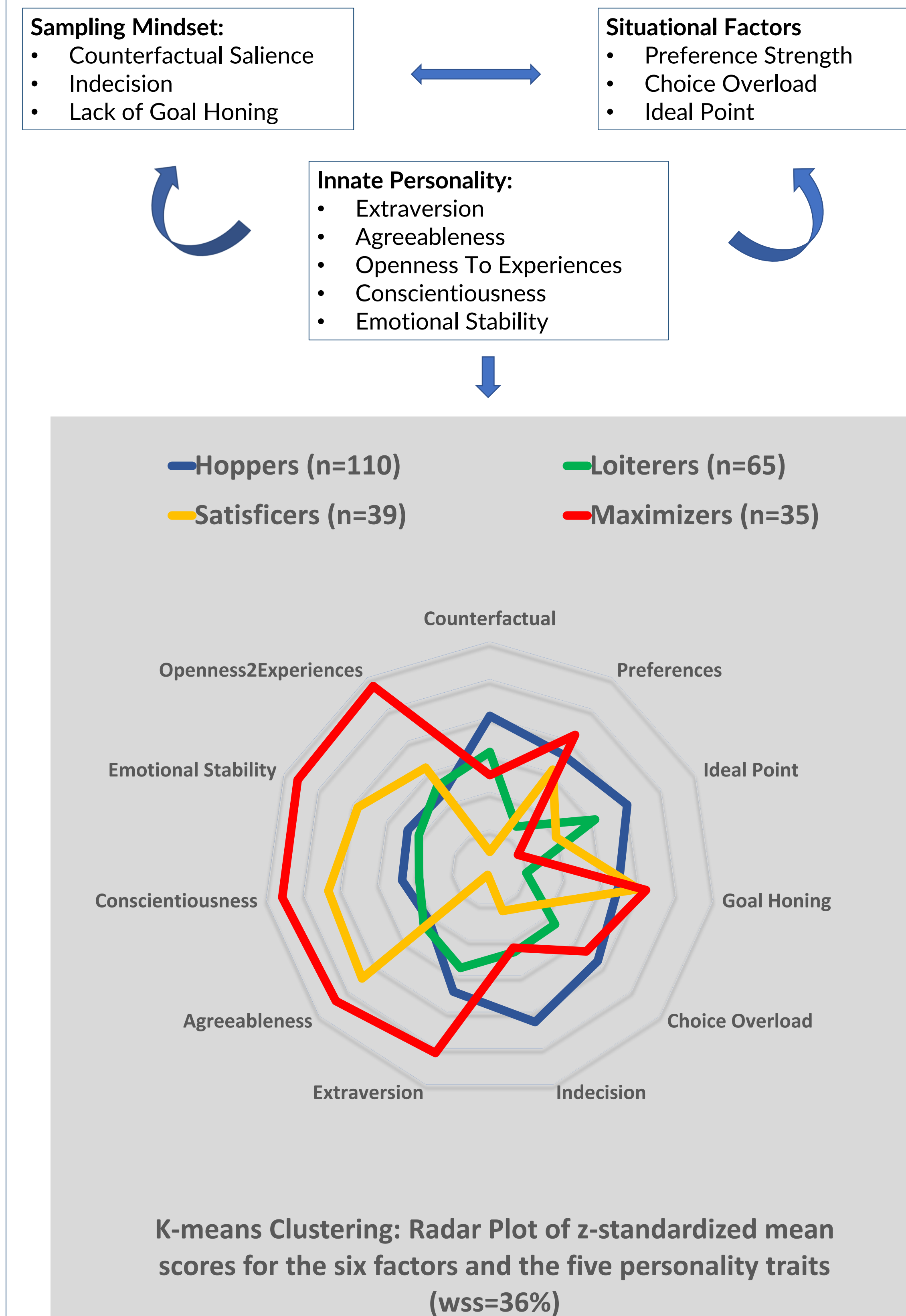
1. TiPi -10 item Personality Scale (Gosling et al., 2003)
2. Consideration Process
3. Decision Making Process
4. Measure outcomes like – Viewing Choice Satisfaction, Happiness Index, Life Goals Commitment, Political Inclination
5. Demographics

Consideration differences were measured using a 20 item scale ($\alpha=.83$). The chosen EFA model (RMSEA=0.05/TLI=0.89) yields 3 factors: **Counterfactual Salience, Preference Strength and Ideal Point Availability**

Decision Making differences were measured using a 15 item scale ($\alpha=.89$). The chosen model (RMSEA=0.04/TLI=.97) yields 3 factors: **Goal Honing, Choice Overload and Indecision**

The following constructs help identify a high v/s low sampling mindset: **Counterfactual Salience, Indecision and Goal Honing**

Samplers: A Typology



Cluster Analysis Findings:

We propose, broadly there are two types of samplers – those who exhibit a high sampling mindset (with two sub-types i.e. Hoppers and Loiterers); and those who exhibit a low sampling mindset (with two sub-types i.e. Maximizers and Satisficers).

MINDSET LEVEL	TYPE	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
High Sampling Mindset	Hoppers	• High Counterfactual Salience	• Strong content type preference
	Loiterers	• High Indecision • Low Goal Honing	• Low or Weak content type preference
Low Sampling Mindset	Maximisers	• Low Counterfactual Salience • Low Indecision	• High Extraversion • High Variety Seeking
	Satisficers	• High Goal Honing	• Low Extraversion • Low Variety Seeking

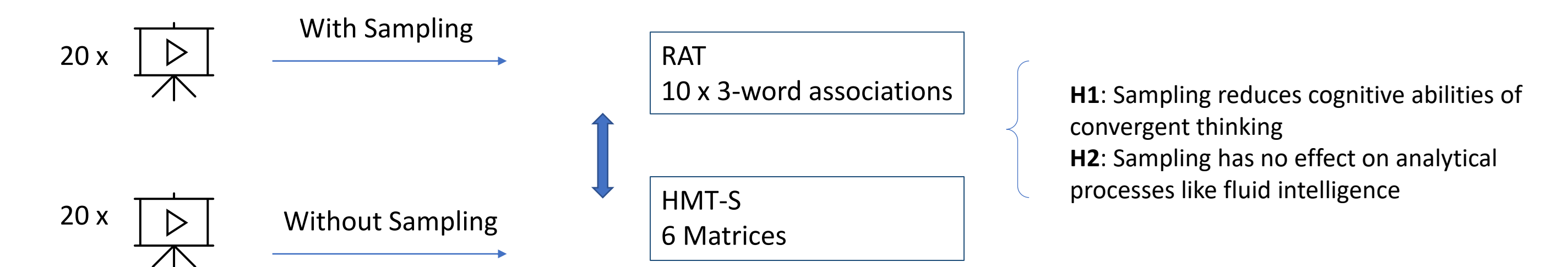
There is correlational evidence here for stronger preferences and swift goal honing can mitigate a sampling mindset even in the absence of strong ideal points to begin with.

Study B: Sampling Mindset Consequences

Study 2 (N=121) is a standalone study for finding empirical evidence of the consequences of a sampling mindset on two kinds of subsequent cognitive tasks – the Remote Associates Test (10 Q)³ for measuring convergent thinking and the Hagen Matrices Test-S (6 Matrices) (Heydasch et al., 2020) for a measure of fluid intelligence.

Convergent thinking as measured by RATs is considered fundamental to creativity and we propose that sampling will affect our cognitive abilities of convergent thinking but unlikely to affect our general analytical abilities and hence no effect should be seen on fluid intelligence

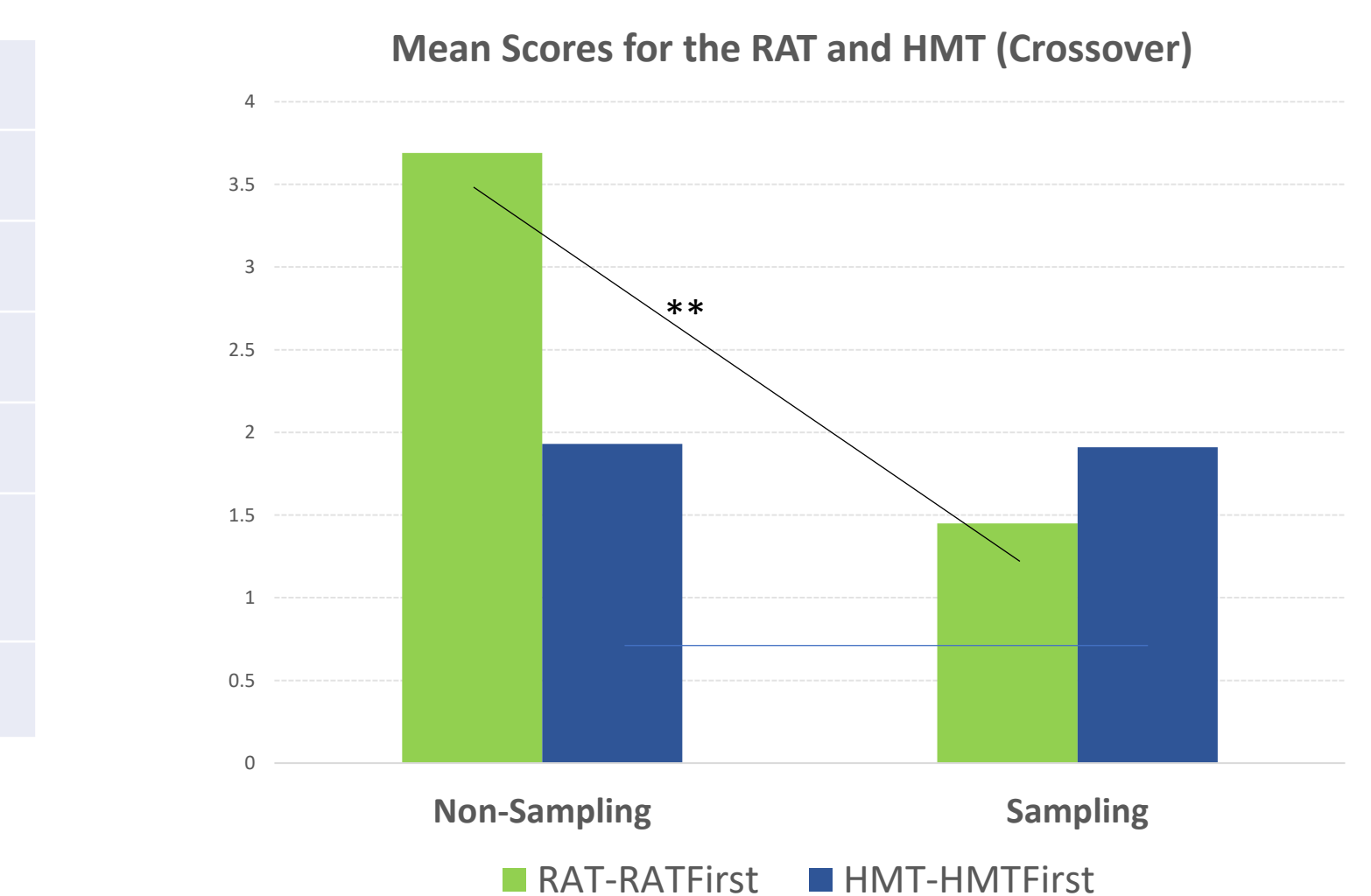
Method: Stimuli – Rick Steves' Europe Travel Videos



Design: 2(Sampling v/s Non-Sampling) x 2(RAT First v/s HMT-S First)

Results: We find support for H1 that a Sampling Mindset engenders a loss in convergent thinking consequent to the decision making process, and we find support for H2, i.e. similar effects are not seen for fluid intelligence. However we find that the effects don't persist when HMT is attempted before the RAT

	Non-Sampling	Sampling	p-value
RAT	3.23	2.6	0.52
HMT	2.02	1.98	0.893
RAT-RATFirst	3.69	1.45	0.023
RAT-HMT-First	2.55	3.25	0.444
HMT-HMTFirst	1.93	1.91	0.972
HMT-RATFirst	2.08	2.1	0.957



Manipulation Checks:

- Decision Difficulty(****)
- Decision Minutes(*)

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