

Abstract

Associations and concepts are key notions in the understanding of human reasoning in fields such as Philosophy, Cognitive Sciences, Linguistics and, more recently, Computer Science. In this paper, we propose a tractable framework in which to introduce the role of concept associations in choice behavior. In our model, the evaluation of alternatives may depend on their associations to concepts, where the relevant concepts are defined by the choice context. We provide axiomatic foundations to give empirical content to the model and develop a measure of the comparative statics of associations. We show that the model could be instrumental in understanding a wide range of behavioral phenomena, such as framing, discrimination, identity, culture, marketing, the media and political economy.