

It's Not What You Do, It's What You Think: The Science of Beliefs in the Marketplace

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Abstract

Beliefs shape how consumers and practitioners interact with the marketplace. In this special session, we showcase cutting-edge research on the science of beliefs.

The session begins by examining how the pursuit of meaning shapes product preferences. While consumers believe that longer-lasting products will be more meaningful (Williams & Percival Carter 2019), **Mead and Williams** show that consumers pursuing meaning (vs. pleasure) prefer lower-quality (vs. higher-quality) products. Moving downstream in the consumer decision-making process, **Lee and colleagues** examine how beliefs about others shape checkout preferences. More specifically, when consumers believe they will be judged negatively by others, they avoid human interaction and use self-checkout. However, when consumers believe they will be judged positively by others, they are more likely to use human cashiers than self-checkouts. Moving to product retention and disposal, **Valenzuela and Meng** examine how beliefs about luck shape people's desire to hold onto a product. They argue and find that consumers want to hold onto lucky products for longer, thereby increasing their selling price. **Schwartz and Mochon** conclude the session by highlighting a disconnect between beliefs about diversity and what actually creates diversity. While people believe that making decisions about excluding others reduces diversity, in reality making decisions about including others hinders diversity.

These papers highlight important new insights into how beliefs shape marketplace behavior. We expect this session to have appeal to EMAC attendees given the theoretical contributions and practical applications of the work highlighted in the session.

The Pursuit of Meaning Leads to Frugality

Nicole Mead & Lawrence Williams

When people want consumption to be meaningful, what do they choose? While consumers believe that longer-lasting products bring more meaning (Williams & Percival Carter 2019), we find that consumers who pursue meaning (vs. pleasure) choose less expensive, lower-quality products because of an increased focus on opportunity costs.

To Show Off or to Shy Away:

The Effect of Self-Conscious Emotions on Self-Checkout Usage

Leonard Lee, Yih Hwai Lee, Xiuping Li, Yan Zhang, & Chong Juin Kuan

We explore the effects of self-image-related feelings on grocery shopping, focusing on one negative and one positive emotion. When buying embarrassing products, consumers coped with the embarrassment by using self-checkout (vs. human cashiers). An opposite pattern was observed when consumers purchased products that elicited pride.

Product Valuation and Beliefs in Good Luck:

A Context of Application of the “Possession-Self Link”

Yan Meng & Ana Valenzuela

“Good” luck associations impact the endowment effect. Three studies show that the possession-self link becomes relevant when the luck associated with the self through the possession of the product facilitates the endowment effect. When the self is threatened, the link between self and “luck” weakens and the endowment effect disappears.

Exclude-Include Bias in Targeted Advertising

Janet Schwartz & Daniel Mochon

We tested whether asking participants to either exclude or include Facebook user groups in ad targeting tasks led to different demographic composition of targeted audiences. In all four studies, we observed an Exclude-Include bias where targeted audiences were significantly more diverse when participants curated by excluding than by including.

