Exploring the Context-Dependency of Firms' Portrayals of Consumer Nature

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Abstract

Extant research highlights that concepts of consumer nature vary between the endpoints of consumer libertarianism and consumer paternalism. Marketers might occupy one of these endpoints to legitimize the use of opportunistic marketing efforts. For example, reduced (complicated) choice sets might be justified due to the portrayal of consumers as naïve (sovereign) decision makers. To protect consumers from such practices, it is crucial to examine whether firms in fact adapt their portrayals of consumer nature flexibly. This present research utilizes transformer models to extract firms' portrayals of consumer nature from 5,230 quarterly earnings call transcripts. Eventually, we demonstrate firms' context-dependent adaptation of portrayals of consumer nature across major industry sectors by means of topic modeling. In doing so, this research helps to reduce opportunistic instrumentalizations of concepts of consumer nature in future, thereby increasing consumer welfare in the long run.

Subject Areas: *Decision-Making, Information Systems, Market Analysis and Response, Organization Behavior, Theory and Philosophy of Marketing*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics