20 25 AMA MARKETING & PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Building Resilience by Building Bridges: Business, Marketing and Policy for Societal Well-Being

> June 20-22 • Washington, DC

PROCEEDINGS

Volume 35

Co-Chairs:

Chris Berry, Colorado State University

Eva Kipnis, University of Bradford

Riley Krotz, Florida State University

2025 AMA Marketing and Public Policy Conference

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2025 Marketing & Public Policy Conference Awards

Best Conference Paper Award

Award winner:

"Do Food Assistance Programs Improve Young Mothers' Nutritious Consumption?"
Ankit Singh, Vedha Ponnappan, Prakash Satyavageeswaran, and Sundar Bharadwaj

Honorable mentions:

"How Fatal School Shootings Impact a Community's Consumption"
Muzeeb Shaik, John Costello, Mike Palazzolo, Adithya Pattabhiramiah, and Shrihari Sridhar

"Political Ideology Influences Imposed Effort to Attain Government Food Aid, Yet Messaging Can Intervene"
Nea North and Connie Pechmann

"Transforming Homelessness: A Strength-Based Framework for Marketing"
Mark Buschgens, Marian Makkar, Bernardo Figueiredo, and Jonas Lim

Brenda M. Derby Memorial Award for Best Doctoral Student Paper

Award winner:

"Businesses taking a stance on immigration – Types of message, public perception, and voter support for anti-immigration policies"
Elina Sanchez Garcia and Torsten Bornemann

Honorable mention:

"Revisiting a Dark Side of the Marketing System: When Consumers Believe It Is an Instrument for Symbolic Violence"
Ignacio Vargas and Francisco Guzmán

Welcome to the 2025 AMA Marketing & Public Policy Conference!

We feel very honored to serve as chairs of the 2025 Marketing & Public Policy Conference and welcome all participants coming together in Washington, DC, to share research, foster meaningful connections, support our junior scholars, and advance the field of marketing and public policy. In choosing the conference theme for this year, "Building Resilience by Building Bridges: Business, Marketing and Policy for Societal Well-Being," we hoped to invite and bring together different perspectives on how collaboration across business, marketing, and policy can strengthen societal well-being and help communities thrive in the face of today's challenges.

In that spirit, we've curated a program that highlights the power of partnerships—between individuals, organizations, and institutions—to create lasting, positive policy change. Our sessions and speakers showcase how bridging gaps between sectors and perspectives can build more resilient systems and more inclusive policy futures.

We would like to express our appreciation for an incredibly rich range of special sessions that showcase novel topics and those growing in significance. The session on resilience in conflict-affected areas presents a rare opportunity to learn from firsthand experiences and observations of marketing and policy practitioners in Ukraine. Three sessions spotlight approaches for designing research with societal impact emerging from Transformative Consumer Research—an area of marketing scholarship that prioritizes collaboration with stakeholders as a core tenet of the research process. The roundtable on food allergies brings together medical specialists, nonprofit founders, restaurant association representatives, and consumer advocates to unpack the tensions between policy and practice in the context of food allergy accommodation in food service environments and the importance of collaboration to develop innovative solutions.

A special thanks also goes to our conference keynote speaker, Danielle Lane, for sharing her insight and experience in international development and humanitarian assistance across the public, private, and third sectors and diverse geographies, including the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. We hope that Danielle's insights on working with and co-creating with policy makers inspire many collaborations in the future.

Beyond these special events, our conference is filled with cutting-edge research across a wide range of topics, including sustainable practices, fostering the critical consumption of information, healthcare access and outcomes, competition policy, antitrust, and market power, and more. This work reflects the depth and breadth of our community's commitment to using marketing and policy as tools for societal good, and we would like to take this moment to thank all of you who are presenting your research for the richness of our program.

We also want to recognize the 21st anniversary of the Junior Scholars Workshop, where emerging scholars engage with esteemed marketing and public policy faculty in an immersive

one-day experience. This event serves an important role in supporting junior scholars' journeys toward policy impact and involvement in our research community. We would like to sincerely thank all of the mentors for their leadership in making this annual event so impactful, as well as the Marketing and Society SIG and our sponsors for enabling over 70 total participants in this year's workshop.

This is a very special community—one that leads with heart, purpose, and a shared vision for building resilience and building bridges. We hope this conference strengthens the bridges between public policy and us as scholars, colleagues, collaborators, and friends.

We hope you each have a rewarding, inspiring, and connections-rich conference experience!

Warmly,
Chris, Eva, and Riley

Chris Berry, Colorado State University
Eva Kipnis, University of Bradford
Riley Krotz, Florida State University

AMA Marketing and Society Special Interest Group (MASSIG) Lifetime Achievement Award for 2025

Sonya A. Grier
Kogod Eminent Scholar Chair in Marketing, Kogod School of Business, American University
Lunch Speech, June 21, 2025

The Beloved Community

I am deeply honored to receive the American Marketing Association Marketing and Society Special Interest Group (MASSIG) Lifetime Achievement Award for 2025. To have my work recognized by this community is profoundly humbling.

I want to begin by offering my heartfelt thanks to the MASSIG committee, to my department chair, Ron Hill, for nominating me, and for his unyielding support, and to all of you in this room. This is an extraordinary honor—and one that I accept with deep gratitude and reflection. And my appreciation is not just for this recognition, but also to all of you, for being my people… my research community.

I did not plan to be a part of this community, because in the early 1990s when I was a PhD student, I didn't even know this community existed. Yet I was interested in many areas that touch upon issues of marketing and society, including race and target marketing, social marketing, and the social impact of marketing. These issues were not present in my PhD program, none of the faculty in my program studied them, and these issues were not prominent in the field. I was also advised by multiple well-intentioned faculty members not to study such issues, or to at least wait until I had tenure.

One of my dissertation co-chairs, John Sherry, recognized this disconnect between my interests and the priorities of the field. He advised me that given my specific, non-mainstream interests, it was especially important for me to find what he called my invisible college—a group of like-minded scholars. And one day, during the second year of my PhD program, he gave me a flyer and said: "Perhaps you should check this conference out. Maybe these are your people?"

It was a flyer for the 1993 Marketing and Public Policy Conference at Michigan State in East Lansing, Michigan. I went and was enthralled with the diversity of marketing and society topics. I met scholars who prioritized research to make the marketplace safe and fair for consumers. Scholars who were having an impact on society, well before it became trendy or an institutional requirement. I had found my people! And I have rarely missed this conference since. And my very first publication was in *JPPM*, two years later, with two scholars from the conference, Jerome Williams and Bill Qualls, on racially exclusive advertising.

Since then, I have watched the community of scholars in marketing who are focused on issues related to marketing and society grow. First with Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) in

2005, which brought together scholars focused on using research to improve consumer welfare. And then again in 2015, when we founded the Race in the Marketplace (RIM) research network, which investigates race and racism to support equity across diverse marketplaces. This enlarged community of like-minded scholars focused on research in marketing and society issues, has created impactful research to support consumer well-being, and contributed to more fair, inclusive and equitable marketplaces worldwide.

Today, we are in a defining moment that is challenging our aims. Almost daily, we see signs of coordinated backlash and retrenchment from hard-fought gains around equity. Efforts to make society better are being undermined across domains, from corporate boardrooms to university classrooms and in our research. Institutions and individuals are being pressured to retreat from the values at the core of our community: Justice. Fairness. Equity and sustainability. This is not happening by accident; history shows us that such attempts to turn back the clock appear when we are making progress. So this is not the time to retreat in our efforts. We must be courageous and continue to strategically create impactful research, and innovative teaching, while strengthening our community. We have a lot to contribute. And I believe the concept of the Beloved Community can be our guide.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a vision of the Beloved Community. For him, this is a community grounded in equality, justice and love, where all individuals are treated with respect, empathy and dignity. He envisioned a world free from poverty, hunger, and hate, where people live in harmony and work together to overcome social and economic injustice. And Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community was not a pipe dream. He saw it as a realistic goal achievable through conscious effort. As a commitment and a practice. Dr. King's vision has shaped not only the practice of my scholarship but also how I have tried to show up as a human being in this work.

Indeed, the concept of the Beloved Community has broad practical application for the research that we all do on issues at the intersection of marketing and society. The concept provides a guide to create research in support of societies where everyone has equitable access to the marketplace resources and opportunities that allow them to thrive. How might this translate into practice?

Our research into areas of marketing and society is not just about consumer behavior, market dynamics or regulation. At core, our research is about impacting people's lives in a positive way—about whose stories are told, whose needs are seen, and whose lives are dignified in the systems we create and study. This means that our research must take a critical lens to identify and challenge structural inequity embedded in markets, practices and policies. And we can also use research to propose reparative strategies and ethical alternatives.

We must investigate overlooked consumers and topics and use methods that respect consumers' knowledge and agency. Because, after all, they know their lives better than we do. And we must humanize people, not just as consumers, but as people with full lives where consumption is just one dimension of their humanity. With this as our practice, we can help turn Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community into reality.

Throughout my career, this community has given me space in marketing to ask hard questions related to how marketing can be reimagined as a force for equity and collective well-being. And I have not been doing that alone, but with 100-plus co-authors. These are people who have walked this marketing and society road with me. So, this award for my lifetime of work on marketing and society issues is not just for me. It also reflects the many mentors who poured into me, who modeled what commitment, care, and integrity look like in scholarship. This recognition also belongs to the collaborators and students who have pushed me to expand my vision. And it belongs to all the members of this Beloved Community, both inside and outside the academy, who have helped me understand what inclusion, equity, and justice require, and supported me to create impactful research.

As I conclude, I especially want to thank this Marketing and Society community for being my intellectual home, and for making space for work that challenges, disrupts, and dares to dream. We know that research is not neutral. Our research can uphold the status quo—or it can imagine something more liberating, more just, more human, and more loving. I accept this award as a reminder—and a charge—to continue choosing the latter.

In the spirit of the Beloved Community, may we continue to build a community that values:
- Truth over convenience,
- Equity over tradition, and
- People over profits.

Again, thank you for this tremendous honor—and for being my beloved community. I am so grateful to walk this path with you.

Special Thanks to the 2025 MPPC Reviewers

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TITLE: A SYSTEMATIC EXAMINATION OF SHRINKFLATION ON CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS: EVIDENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES

Authors: Ramkumar Janakiraman (North Carolina State University), Kaushik Bhattacharjee (University of Manitoba), Rishika Rishika (North Carolina State University), Harsha Kamatham (University of Manitoba), Chandrasekhar Manchiraju (Michigan State University)

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Keywords: shrinkflation, food and beverage industry, inflation, price increase, product downsizing.

Description: The study empirically documents the extent of a phenomenon termed shrinkflation across food and beverage products across the United States.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Amidst global inflationary concerns, while consumers are facing an increase in the cost of living and a decrease in purchasing power, many firms choose to sustain their profits by subtly downsizing the products they sell.[1] In line with this trend, manufacturers of various food and beverage products in the United States shrank their package sizes while maintaining or increasing the prices at which the products are sold, a practice termed "Shrinkflation." While some manufacturers have used shrinkflation as a strategy for a long time, the number of manufacturers using shrinkflation has increased dramatically since 2016. Additionally, in recent years, shrinkflation not only generated strong negative reactions among U.S. consumers (with 82% of respondents in a recent YouGov survey expressing concerns about the practice of shrinkflation) but also attracted significant attention from the popular press and policymakers including Joe Biden, the former president of the U.S. Despite being a widely used practice, to the best of our knowledge, no research has systematically explored the extent of shrinkflation across various product categories. Thus, the primary objective of this study is to empirically document the extent of shrinkflation across different product categories in the food and beverage industry.

Method and Data

The primary data for this study comes from Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD), which reports new product launches, trends, and innovations in the packaged food and beverage product industry. Our data spans eight years and consists of the product characteristics, such as the quantity and the price of the products that underwent a reduction in package size across all

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[1] References are available upon request.

categories in the food and beverage industry over these eight years. We employ a panel data study to investigate the extent of shrinkflation across product categories, enabling us to compare the variations in a change in the quantity and price of products before and after a change in package size.

Summary of Findings

The findings from our research are threefold. First and foremost, we document the extent across those product categories that underwent the highest shrinkflation. Second, we find that the unhealthy product categories underwent higher shrinkflation than the healthy products. Finally, we find that the extent of shrinkflation is higher for high-priced brands and name brands.

Key Contributions

Our study adds to the nascent research exploring the shrinkflation phenomenon from theoretical and practical perspectives. To our knowledge, this study is among the first empirical studies to document the extent of shrinkflation across different product categories. The results provide evidence that several firms in the U.S. have adopted shrinkflation during recent economic crises. Further, our study contributes to the literature by proposing a novel measure of shrinkflation. Our proposed metric is robust enough to measure shrinkflation by accounting for package size and price changes. Beyond academic literature, this research holds significant value for non-academic stakeholders, particularly policymakers, consumer advocacy groups, and regulatory bodies. Shrinkflation has triggered adverse consumer reactions and has drawn regulatory attention in several industrialized nations. Several elected representatives in the United States proposed legislation in 2024 to resolve shrinkflation. Although our study focuses on the United States, insights from our research can also inform stakeholders and policymakers in other countries (e.g.,

Canada and France) where regulators are actively discussing measures to counter shrinkflation and safeguard consumer interests.

AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF NORTHVOLT'S SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVEN SCALING FAILURE

Shreyas Pandit, Stockholm University

Contact Info: For further information, please contact Lead Author's Shreyas Pandit, Stockholm University (shreyas.pandit@sbs.su.se).

Keywords: Sustainability Marketing, Symbolic Trap, Overextension, Institutional Theory, Legitimacy Performance

Description: This study critically examines how institutional pressures surrounding sustainability shape the strategic and marketing practices of high-growth ventures, using Northvolt as a revelatory case to investigate how firms project symbolic alignment with sustainability norms before foundational capabilities are in place.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: How do sustainability-driven firms perform legitimacy under institutional pressures, and what tensions emerge between symbolic marketing and organizational substance?

Method and Data: This study employs a qualitative, document-based methodology, to critically analyze Northvolt's approach to sustainability. Adopting a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist and critical epistemological stance, the research examines sustainability as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by institutional logics and power dynamics. The data collection involved a thematic analysis of 45 publicly available documents, including press releases, media articles, policy reports, and investor communications published between 2016 and 2024, purposefully selected to reflect the symbolic, political, and institutional dimensions of Northvolt's sustainability narrative. The thematic analysis

focused on uncovering recurring institutional logics, discursive patterns, and ideological tensions, using conceptual lenses such as legitimacy, isomorphism, decoupling, and greenwashing as interpretive anchors.

Summary of Findings: The case of Northvolt demonstrates how institutional pressures compel high-growth ventures to perform legitimacy through visible alignment with sustainability norms, profoundly shaping their marketing and strategic scaling. Initially, Northvolt garnered significant investment and public trust by framing itself as a geopolitical and environmental project aligned with the European Green Deal and emphasizing carbon-neutral operations and circular supply chains. This "legitimacy as performance" was largely projected, often lacking the foundational capabilities to match its ambitious sustainability claims.

The aggressive scaling, driven by marketing narratives and investor expectations, led to operational fragility. Despite securing vast contracts, Northvolt faced significant production delays, quality issues, and financial losses, exposing a divergence between its symbolic positioning and technical readiness. This created a "symbolic trap," where overreliance on external legitimacy performance diverted resources from critical capability-building. As operational gaps deepened, stakeholders grew disillusioned, leading to a collapse of Northvolt's pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy. Northvolt's trajectory exemplifies the vulnerability of ventures that scale based on symbolic conformity rather than substantive capability within green capitalism.

Key Contributions: This study introduces the "symbolic trap," a concept explaining how green capitalism's pressures can drive firms into escalating symbolic sustainability commitments that outpace tangible progress. It refines existing institutional theories by highlighting the systemic compulsion behind decoupling and symbolic compliance, demonstrating that these are often responses to mimetic forces, coercive regulations, and

normative expectations, rather than purely deliberate choices. In sustainability marketing, the research emphasizes how narratives become a constitutive force shaping expectations and organizational trajectories, while warning of the risks of symbolic overextension, including credibility loss and greenwashing.

Practically, the findings suggest that prioritizing symbolic performance risks fostering "green fatigue," public cynicism, and devaluing sustainability claims, potentially impeding genuine environmental progress. The study advises policymakers to link public subsidies to operational benchmarks rather than aspirational narratives to mitigate systemic fragility. Investors are urged to critically evaluate the operational depth behind marketing-driven sustainability claims. Finally, early-stage ventures must recognize that relying solely on legitimacy projection, while opening doors, can create significant strategic liabilities if unchecked.

References are available upon request.

BEYOND VOIDS MARKET MAKING AT THE MARGINS - BRICOLAGE AND INFORMAL NETWORKS AMONG TEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Fatos Ozkan Erciyas, University of Birmingham

Sibel Orhan Yildiz, Turkish Higher Education Quality Council

For further information, please contact Fatos Ozkan Erciyas, Assistant Professor, University of Birmingham (f.ozkanerciyas@bham.ac.uk).

Keywords: Institutional Voids; Bricolage; Informal Networks; Temporary Agricultural Workers

Description: The paper reveals how export-oriented agricultural labour markets are held together by bricolage-based informal networks spanning informal labour brokers, women's support collectives, kin and transport intermediaries that collectively supply the layered market functions of matching, governance, infrastructure, and information, thereby stabilising production while also hard-wiring dependencies and inequalities.

Research Question

Temporary agricultural workers are indispensable to export-oriented food supply chains yet occupy the margins of national labour regimes; Türkiye characterises this paradox. In settings where wage enforcement, portable social security, and safe housing are weak or absent, these workers confront what literature label institutional voids (Khanna and Palepu, 1997;). Prior research shows how firms or entrepreneurs navigate such gaps, but the collective governance work of precarious labourers is rarely examined (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Martí and Mair, 2009; Olarewaju and Fasholaand, 2021; Puffer et al., 2010). Adopting a layered market-systems lens, we treat voids not as blanks but as arenas where heterogeneous informal actors— *dayıbaşı* labour brokers, women's support collectives, transport micro-entrepreneurs, kin leaders, and peer information networks—co-create essential market functions through bricolage (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Baker and Nelson, 2005; Mateus and Sarkar, 2024), the improvised recombination of available social and material resources. Specifically, we explore how these networks assemble the layers of matching, rule-making, infrastructure, information, governance, and adaptation that keep the seasonal agricultural labour market running (Marion and Nairn, 2011;). We then ask: *What consequences does this layered bricolage hold for worker resilience, dependency, and public-policy design?* Framing the inquiry this way recentres labour agency in institutional theory and highlights the double-edged nature of grassroots tactics that simultaneously secure livelihoods and entrench new dependencies.

Method and Data

We employed a multi-sited filedwork in three agricultural cities. Using purposive sampling, we conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with agricultural workers, two *dayıbaşı* informal brokers, one farm owner - until thematic saturation was reached. Interviews probed recruitment paths, wage bargaining, livelihood portfolios, and risk perceptions. Observations in tent settlements and fields documented camp routines such as communal cooking, childcare rotation, and ad-hoc tool improvisation. Verbatim transcripts, photographs, and fieldnotes were coded inductively following Braun–Clarke reflexive thematic analysis. Complementary documentary analysis covered labour circulars, policy briefs, NGO reports, and media articles

on temporary agricultura work in Turkiye. Triangulating interviews, observations, and documents supplied thick description, cross-validated emergent themes, and demonstrated how bricolage-based networks deliver layered market functions amid institutional voids.

Summary of Findings

Recruitment webs (Actor + Information layers). Kin referrals, returning crew leaders, minibus owners, and *dayıbaşı* brokers form overlapping networks that locate jobs, bundle crews, coordinate transport, and negotiate wages; WhatsApp groups broadcast daily piece-rates and demand hotspots. Newcomers—especially recent refugees—enter on disadvantageous terms, revealing a stratified actor layer.

Camp social infrastructure (Institution + Artefact layers). Women's collectives transform makeshift camps into service hubs via communal kitchens, childcare rotas, and rotating savings pools. Employers sometimes supply water trucks or power hook-ups in exchange for on-time harvests, creating hybrid public–private provisioning that lowers reproduction costs but reinforces gendered care burdens.

Mobile bricolage practices (Governance + Adaptive layers). Workers improvise rainwater collectors from tarps, retrofit tractor trailers into commuter shuttles, and patch-work annual income through multi-crop migration calendars. These micro-innovations buffer wage delays and crop failures yet cannot overturn structural asymmetries: *dayıbaşı* retain monopsony power over wage setting, and state agencies seldom enforce labour codes.

Collectively, these mechanisms stabilise supply chains while reproducing vertical dependency on brokers and horizontal exclusion of workers without dense social ties. Camp infrastructures, though functional, still expose families to health hazards and child-labour risks.

Key Contributions

We recast voids as arenas of micro-level market making. Informal actors supply substitute rules, infrastructures, and information flows, showing that individuals—not only firms— undertake "institutional work." Hybrid governance thus emerges from below rather than via formal reform. Findings extend bricolage from solo entrepreneurship to community practice: workers collectively recombine social capital, discarded materials, and digital tools to build resilience even as new hierarchies solidify around access to networks and resources. Agency and constraint therefore co-exist, demanding a layered view of informal systems.

Building on these insights, we outline actionable leverage points across governance, infrastructure, information, and adaptive layers that policymakers, firms, and NGOs can implement immediately. Together, they translate grassroots ingenuity into durable, fairer labour markets without eroding the flexibility growers depend on.

(References available upon request.)

BUSINESSES TAKING A STANCE ON IMMIGRATION – TYPES OF MESSAGE, PUBLIC PERCEPTION, AND VOTER SUPPORT FOR ANTI-IMMIGRATION POLICIES

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Keywords: corporate sociopolitical activism, immigration, functional indispensability, labor shortage

Description: This paper explores the impact of corporate sociopolitical activism on public perception of immigration and consumer responses, revealing that businesses—particularly those addressing labor shortage—can shape societal attitudes more effectively than politicians without negatively affecting consumer buying intentions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Labor shortage has emerged as a critical economic issue in many developed countries, threatening economic growth and social stability (Ellingrud, 2024). Despite arguments for immigrants' functional indispensability to these countries' economies, right-wing political actors frequently frame immigration as a threat (Blake, 2024), thereby polarizing public sentiment (Pfeifer, 2024). Although historically rather neutral, many businesses recently advocated for immigration (Lindsay, 2024). This raises a key question: how do corporate statements on immigrants' role affect public opinion while accounting for consumers' reaction to the firm?

Corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA) refers to companies publicly supporting or opposing a partisan issue (Bhagwat et al., 2020). We investigate how CSA related to immigration influences public perception, particularly views on immigrants' indispensability to the economy. We apply issue ownership theory from political science, which posits that actors are seen as more competent when addressing issues within their perceived domain (Walgrave et al., 2016). We adapt this to businesses by defining business issue ownership (BIO) as high when a topic aligns with a firm's core economic function and directly concerns its primary stakeholders (Carroll, 1979; Maignan, 2001). We examine two arguments in favor for immigration: workforce necessity (high BIO) and diversity as a moral value (low BIO).

Method and Data

We first conducted a representative survey in Germany to examine public perceptions of BIO. Amongst others, businesses were perceived as having higher ownership over labor shortage issues and lower BIO regarding diversity. Building on these insights, we conducted a vignette-based

online experiment employing a randomized design with four conditions prior to federal state elections in Germany. The context was particularly suitable due to the high salience of the topic (immigration) in the pre-election phase. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: a politician supporting immigration with a labor shortage argument, a manager using the same labor shortage argument (high BIO), a manager advocating immigration based on a diversity argument (low BIO), or a control group without any statement. To obtain a representative sample of the voting population, we collaborated with a market research company.

Summary of Findings

Results reveal that a CSA framing of the immigration topic based on a rationale with high BIO significantly improves perceptions of immigration, outperforming similar statements from politicians. These results underscore the substantial influence of the arguments used in messaging. Political orientation also significantly affects perceptions of immigrants' indispensability to the society: more right-leaning individuals generally perceived lower indispensability of immigrants. Importantly, however, CSA messaging based on high BIO rationales increased citizens' perception of immigrants' indispensability across all political camps. These results suggest that businesses may have the ability to influence societal perceptions of controversial issues regardless of stakeholders' political views.

Finally, our results indicate that the rationale chosen has an impact on buying behavior: whereas a CSA rationale in favor of immigration based on low BIO negatively influenced buying intentions of conservative customers, no such effect was observed for the same topic based on a high BIO rationale.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the academic debate by providing a comprehensive analysis of the influence of CSA on public issue perception, particularly within the highly polarized context of immigration. Our findings demonstrate the impact of CSA on immigration-related perceptions and business-related outcomes.

By empirically examining two distinct CSA arguments with different levels of BIO—workforce necessity (high BIO) and increased diversity (low BIO)—we offer novel insights into how businesses can effectively engage in public discourse to address critical economic and social challenges, such as immigration and societal polarization. By comparing businesses' CSA efforts with a control group and politicians' statements in a pre-election context, we reveal that, in some cases, businesses can shape public opinion more effectively than policymakers.

Our findings highlight CSA's potential to promote economic growth, foster inclusivity, and reduce inequalities, aligning with SDGs 8 and 10. Given that societal polarization ranks among the top three global risks by the World Economic Forum, our study underscores the role businesses can play in mitigating polarization.

These insights extend beyond academia, offering practical guidance for businesses to engage responsibly in sociopolitical discourse—fostering social cohesion and mitigate polarization, without compromising their own business interests.

References are available upon request.

CANCEL BEHAVIOR: RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE THROUGH PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA EMPOWERMENT

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Keywords: Cancel Behavior, Retributive Justice, Brand Offense, Social Media Empowerment

Description: Grounded in retributive justice theory, this research investigates how personal (vs. empathetic) offense fuels cancel behavior through perceived empowerment, and how this effect is amplified when social media's advocacy role is threatened.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research advances our understanding of cancel behavior as a distinct form of consumer activism driven not by institutional reform but by retributive justice. In contrast to traditional activism, cancel behavior reflects direct, emotionally charged responses, boycotts, de-platforming, and public shaming, often rooted in perceived personal offense. While prior work has examined moral outrage and justice preferences, this research identifies the critical role of personal (vs. nonpersonal) offenses and the psychological mechanism of perceived social media empowerment in driving cancel behavior. We also highlight how marginalized consumers, often navigating systemic inequities, are more likely to engage in cancellation when the advocacy role of social media, frequently a consumer's only voice, is perceived as ineffective. Across five studies, we demonstrate that cancel behavior is activated when individuals feel personally targeted by a brand's actions, especially along the lines of identity (e.g., race, gender, religion).

These perceptions of offense heighten feelings of empowerment, particularly through social media, and trigger calls for punitive rather than restorative responses. This perspective reframes cancel behavior as a justice-seeking act shaped by identity, offense, and the evolving power of digital platforms, rather than irrational backlash. This perspective expands theories of consumer justice and activism, offering new insight into how brands are held accountable in polarized digital marketplaces.

Methods and Data

We used a five-study (N=922), mixed-method approach to explore how personal offense, perceived empowerment, and social media dynamics shape cancel behavior. In study 1, we asked 197 participants to recall an offensive brand incident and indicate the level of offensiveness and justice preferences (restorative vs retributive). In study 2, we operationalized the level of offensiveness by personal (vs. nonpersonal), asking 297 participants to recall either a personally relevant or non-personally relevant offensive brand act and to select from a range of social media posts with varying degrees of retributive intensity as a call for justice. In study 3, we employed a qualitative method to develop a thematic representation of the concept of cancel behavior. We asked 40 participants to provide open ended responses on definitions of canceling, examples of brand offenses, and the perceived role of social media. In study 4, we used mediation and moderated mediation with 196 participants to test how perceived social media influence impacts cancel intentions through perceived offensiveness, particularly among marginalized groups. Finally, in study 5, we experimentally tested whether racial identity and perceived empowerment (vs. disempowerment) influence cancel behavior in response to a racially insensitive brand transgression.

Summary of Findings

Our results consistently demonstrated that personal offense (i.e., when individuals feel directly targeted by a brand) triggers stronger cancel intentions than empathetic offense, and that racial identity and social media empowerment are significant predictors. In **Study 1**, higher perceived offensiveness predicted stronger preferences for retributive actions ($\beta = .590$, $p < .01$). In **Study 2**, personal (vs nonpersonal) offense produced higher perceived offensiveness (M = 3.94 vs. 2.67, $p < .001$), and perceived offensiveness fully mediated the link between offense type and cancel intentions ($\beta = 0.26$, CI [.1342, .4050]). **Study 3** found that 83% of participants preferred retributive responses to prejudice-driven offenses, especially racism. Social media was an amplifier of consumer power. **Study 4** confirmed that perceived social media influence boosted cancel intentions via perceived offensiveness ($\beta = 0.13$), especially among racially marginalized consumers and women. In **Study 5**, people of color reported higher offensiveness (M = 3.81 vs. 2.62, $p < .001$), and perceived empowerment mediated the relationship between racial identity and cancel behavior. This link was strongest when social media's advocacy function was threatened. These findings highlight a retributive justice process where personal identity, perceived offense, and social media empowerment collectively drive cancel behavior.

Key Contributions

This research makes three key contributions to consumer behavior, digital activism, and public policy. First, it introduces a novel framework that distinguishes personal from nonpersonal offense in shaping cancel behavior. We used five mixed-method studies to demonstrate that personal (vs. nonpersonal) offense more strongly drives retributive responses, with perceived social media empowerment as a central mechanism. Second, we identify social

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media's dual role as both an enabler and a constraint in consumer activism. Our findings show that marginalized consumers are more likely to seek retributive justice when social media enhances their perceived power. Interestingly, this effect is *intensified* when the social media's effectiveness as an advocacy tool is questioned, revealing an overlooked psychological dynamic in digital activism. Third, the research offers actionable policy insights by reframing cancel behavior as a form of consumer justice. We propose a multi-faceted protection framework that includes (1) consumer protection through DEI compliance training, (2) brand protection from misinformation via content moderation and arbitration pathways, and (3) neutral mechanisms for dispute mediation. This research bridges theoretical understanding and public policy, offering strategies to manage the complexities of cancel culture while safeguarding fairness and accountability across stakeholders.

References available upon request.

CAUGHT BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA: REGULATORY STRUCTURES AND MARKETING AVERSION AS OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS IN A FISHING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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Keywords: social enterprise, public policy, sustainable fishing, blue foods, marketing aversion.

Description: This paper, based on a six-plus-year ethnography of a social enterprise (SE) in the sustainable fishing or "blue foods" space, discusses strategies for overcoming barriers arising from SE's failure to fit standard regulatory categories and from the tendency among some social entrepreneurs to mistrust and dislike what they think of as marketing.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

"Blue foods" – i.e., plant- and animal-based foods derived from aquatic sources – are critical to global food security, local economies, and ecological balance. Public policy at every level of government fails to adequately support social enterprise (SE) in the blue-foods space. Policies privilege large-scale commercial fish harvesting and, to some extent, recreational fishing, while

failing to accommodate the hybrid nature of SEs, which conduct commerce to fund social and environmental missions. Among other problems, existing policies favor unsustainable, extractive fish harvesting and create market barriers to the local consumption of sustainably caught fish. Effective marketing can sometimes sway policy-making, but many social entrepreneurs tend to misunderstand and/or mistrust marketing, which they associate with predatory capitalism and rampant consumerism. In the face of these problems, this research asks: How can a social enterprise dedicated to sustainable fishing and local consumption be successful? What policy changes could provide the necessary support for their mission? How can marketing professionals assist social enterprises while helping them to safeguard the integrity of their social and/or environmental missions?

Method and Data

This paper derives from a long-term ethnographic study of Fishing for Success (F4S), a social enterprise located in the village of Petty Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, which sells fishing- and nature-related tourism experiences to fund an array of social and educational programs benefiting marginalized individuals and, increasingly, schoolchildren with skills and food. The authors have engaged with F4S since 2016 and became established as researchers in the site and residents of the community from 2018 to 2024. As participant observers we have been active in both frontstage (e.g., helping with tourist excursions) and backstage (e.g., helping with site maintenance and marketing consultation) operations. In-situ conversations with stakeholders – including organization members, beneficiaries, customers, politicians, and community members – added rich texture to the observation, as did numerous archival and online sources. Our data analysis has been iterative, concurrent with data construction, and revisited and refined over the years. We have worked inductively, identifying first-level themes,

aggregating to second-level themes, and abstracting to third-level themes and explanatory constructs. As new data arose, we revisited previous conclusions, challenged assumptions, and sought to define the boundaries of our developing conclusions.

Summary of Findings

Like many social entrepreneurs, F4S founders are deeply committed to social missions and community causes. They are well-versed in their own scientific and cultural milieus but have very little experience with business management or marketing, which they associate with the enemy: predatory capitalism. Antidotes to marketing aversion included developing the materiality of the servicescape to create a more welcoming ambience, streamlining service processes, and leveraging high customer satisfaction through social media. One of the most important and enduring strategies involved cross-sector partnerships with schools, aid organizations, and academia, especially in its outreach functions. The problems of unsupportive and obstructive public policy also benefited from the cross-sector partnerships. There is significant overlap between partner organizations and political personnel and initiatives. F4S's contributions to community wellbeing and cumulative impact became increasingly apparent to the public sector. Constant importuning of the body governing Canadian fisheries, combined with ever-increasing legitimacy, eventually led to a special dispensation for F4S, a permit allowing the organization to operate during the entire commercial season without needing a prohibitively expensive commercial fishing quota.

Key Contributions

If social enterprise is to fulfill its potential as a restorative force for communities, then policy makers have a vital role to play. First, they must recognize social enterprise as a uniquely beneficial business model and support it with appropriate policy. In the case of blue foods, this

means supporting organizations, like F4S, that champion sustainable, local fish harvesting, education, and inclusivity in the industry. That support would include differential access to fisheries and the ability to sell surplus catch. Second, to make meaningful progress toward UN SDGs requires pro-social and pro-environmental thinking. Like social enterprises, policy makers need to prioritize people and communities over the extraction of resources and profits. This is especially true when it comes to issues of food sovereignty. Carving off even a small portion of the massive government subsidies that prop up extractive corporate fishing businesses to support SEs would go a long way to encourage social entrepreneurship in the blue-foods sector. Marketing, as a discipline, can contribute by recognizing the special needs and value of social enterprise and disentangling itself from service to corporate capitalism.

References are available upon request.

EXAMINING CONSUMER RESILIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION IN A POST-COVID ERA: INSIGHTS FROM NUDGE THEORY

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Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, Sustainable Curtailment Behavior, Sustainable Choice Behavior, Pro-environmental Self-Identity, Restaurants' Sustainability Practices

Description:
This study explores how post-COVID-19 shifts impact sustainable behaviors in hospitality by examining the role of pro-environmental self-identity, social contribution, and restaurant sustainability practices.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question
How has the natural disaster, i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic, transformed sustainable consumption curtailment behavior (SCCB) and sustainable choice behavior (SCB) in hospitality settings, and what roles do pro-environmental self-identity (PESI), perceived social contribution (PSC), and restaurant sustainability practices (RSP) play in this behavioral transition?

Method and Data
A time-lagged, quantitative study was conducted using a two-wave survey across restaurants in five touristic destinations in Pakistan. The first wave (Time 1) measured COVP, PESI, PSC, and RSP (n=913); the second wave (Time 2), conducted two months later, assessed SCCB and SCB (n=673 complete responses). Validated scales were used, and data were analyzed through PLS-SEM in SmartPLS v.4.10 to examine both direct and moderated relationships while controlling for common method bias.

Summary of Findings
The COVID-19 pandemic positively influenced SCCB, SCB, and PESI. PESI significantly predicted both SCCB and SCB and mediated the relationship between COVP and these behaviors. Furthermore, PSC and RSP significantly moderated the PESI-behavior link, enhancing its explanatory power. The findings confirm that sustainable behavioral changes in the hospitality context are strongly linked to identity and institutional cues, particularly in post-crisis recovery.

Key Contributions
The study advances theoretical understanding by integrating the Norm Activation Model, Self-Determination Theory, and Nudge Theory into a novel framework explaining sustainable behaviors post-pandemic. It highlights PESI as a key mediating mechanism and identifies PSC and RSP as critical moderators. Practically, it offers actionable insights for restaurants and policymakers to design nudges and sustainability programs that reinforce identity-driven environmental behaviors among consumers in emerging markets.

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF THE *DOBBS* DECISION ON DEMAND FOR IMPERFECT SUBSTITUTES

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Keywords: Dobbs, healthcare choice, reproductive health, public policy

Description: This study examines the impact of the Dobbs decision on demand for imperfect substitute products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The *Dobbs* Supreme Court decision resulted in a complete upheaval of abortion access in the U.S. In the current research, we examine how the *Dobbs* decision affected the demand for imperfect substitute products such as contraceptive and sterilization offerings. Additionally, we examine whether the *Dobbs* decision affected female consumers equally or whether its impact varied across different groups of consumers.

Method And Data

We conducted a survey of 1,300 reproductive-age women to assess the impact the Dobbs decision had on demand for imperfect substitute products such as contraceptive and sterilization offerings. Our focal outcome variables sought to assess the effect of the Dobbs decision on behavioral intentions to adopt substitute reproductive healthcare options.

Summary of Findings

Our findings suggest that the effect of the Dobbs decision on reproductive health substitutes does not affect all consumers equally but instead is exacerbated for individuals who ascribe a high degree of political importance to the Dobbs decision. Additionally, for individuals who are particularly attuned to the political changes in their state, the effects of Dobbs were exacerbated – for both contraceptives and sterilization. This is perhaps due to consumers' increased attention to limitations and scarcity of reproductive health options.

Statement of Key Contributions

Recent research has posited that marketers and public policy makers can play a key role in both understanding and addressing the consequences of the Dobbs decision on the broader reproductive healthcare market (Fitzgerald et al. 2024). We believe that the widespread repercussions of individuals' reproductive health choices on consumer well-being warrants special attention from researchers. In doing so, we contribute to the literature intersecting healthcare decision making with the regulatory environment.

Individuals' reproductive healthcare decision-making has long-term implications for both health and economic outcomes. This research is important for organizations that provide reproductive health products and services. Such organizations include retailers (e.g., Walmart, CVS), manufacturers (e.g., pharmaceutical companies, contraceptive product manufacturers), and organizations related to healthcare provision (e.g., physicians, hospitals, insurers). Reproductive health decisions are also of interest to non-profit organizations, government organizations, and public policy makers who seek to impact consumer access to health products and services. By understanding the extent to which consumers view different reproductive healthcare options as

viable – if imperfect – substitutes, decision makers can better understand how disruptions to one

part of the reproductive healthcare landscape affect the broader marketplace.

EXPLORING KEY FACTORS FOR FINANCIAL WELL-BEING ACROSS POVERTY LEVELS: DECISION TREE TECHNIQUE

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Keywords: Financial Well-Being, Poverty Levels, Decision Tree Analysis

Description: This study uses decision tree analysis to identify and compare key drivers of financial well-being across poverty levels, revealing both shared and distinct patterns influenced by financial and psychological factors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

Despite growing interest in financial well-being (FWB), prior research has seldom explored the heterogeneity of FWB determinants across different poverty levels. Most studies focus on generalized predictors or isolated income brackets, overlooking the possibility that key contributing factors may vary substantially across socioeconomic contexts. This study addresses the gap by asking: *What are the shared and unique factors associated with financial well-being across different poverty levels, and how do these factors interact within each group?*
Recognizing that FWB is a subjective construct that may not directly correlate with income, this research aims to reveal patterns that challenge the assumption of a linear relationship between economic status and well-being.

Method And Data (Not Applicable For Nonempirical Papers) – 200 Words

This study utilizes data from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's National Financial Well-Being Survey, encompassing 6,394 respondents and over 200 variables. A supervised machine learning approach, specifically the Classification and Regression Tree (CART) algorithm, was employed to uncover patterns predictive of financial well-being (FWB) across three poverty levels—defined using the Federal Poverty Level (FPL): Poverty 1 (<100%), Poverty 2 (100–199%), and Poverty 3 (≥200%). The target variable was the CFPB Financial Well-Being Score, categorized into "High FWB" and "Low FWB" using a tertile split. Predictor variables spanned seven dimensions including savings, financial behaviors, attitudes, and demographics. Oversampling was applied to address class imbalances, especially in lower-income groups, and 80/20 training-testing splits were used to validate models. Hyperparameter tuning via grid search with 10-fold cross-validation was conducted in R to optimize performance. Case-wise deletion was applied for incomplete responses, yielding a final sample of 2,024. The method's flexibility allowed for capturing nonlinear relationships and variable interactions that

traditional models might overlook, enabling the identification of predictors of FWB. Separate trees were built for each poverty level to allow within-group insight and cross-group comparison.

Summary of Findings – 200 words

Results revealed both shared and unique predictors of financial well-being (FWB) across poverty levels. Common key variables—such as the ability to cover monthly expenses, raise $2,000 in an emergency, and access liquid savings—emerged across all groups, highlighting the ongoing importance of direct financial security. However, distinct split criteria and predictor hierarchies suggested varied prioritizations across poverty levels. For instance, Poverty 1 was uniquely influenced by subjective financial knowledge, information-seeking behaviors, and experiences with debt collectors, while Poverty 2 demonstrated a stronger role for financial skill and non-retirement savings accounts. Psychological traits like perceived economic mobility and future-self connectedness surfaced exclusively in Poverty 2, indicating the growing importance of mindset in moderate-income groups. Poverty 3 reflected higher complexity in financial portfolios, with financial planning, money management, and prior financial shocks serving as critical differentiators. Interestingly, excessive propensity to plan was negatively associated with FWB, challenging traditional assumptions that planning always enhances financial health. Across all levels, the ability to meet financial obligations consistently predicted FWB, reinforcing its foundational role. These findings highlight the importance of both tangible resources and psychological dispositions, and the need to tailor interventions and support systems according to group-specific dynamics.

Key Contributions – 200 words

This study contributes to the academic marketing discipline by integrating machine learning with financial behavior theory to explore nuanced predictors of financial well-being (FWB) across socioeconomic groups. Unlike prior work that treated income as a uniform driver, our study reveals that distinct factors shape FWB depending on poverty level, underscoring the necessity for targeted, segment-specific interventions. Using decision tree analysis, we identify both measurable and psychological variables—such as perceived mobility and future-self connection—that influence FWB differently across income brackets. Notably, our results challenge the assumed universal benefit of financial planning, showing that excessive planning may exacerbate stress and reduce well-being. For marketing scholars, this reframes traditional assumptions about consumer financial behavior and segmentation. For practitioners and policymakers, the findings support the development of products and programs that reflect consumers' financial realities and mindsets. Nonprofits can tailor services to enhance knowledge and resilience among low-income households, while financial institutions can expand offerings for underserved, yet financially resilient, populations. The study advances understanding of how consumers evaluate and experience their financial health and opens new avenues for research on behavioral segmentation, financial service personalization, and the psychological underpinnings of perceived value in financial decision-making.

EXPLORING THE ROLES OF RELIGION, PRO-ENVIRONMENT IDENTITY, AND MENTAL HEALTH ON FOOD CONSUMPTION

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Keywords: Religious Cues, Mental Health, and Food Consumption

Description: This study investigated the roles of religious, environmental, and neutral conditions priming on the likelihood of healthy and unhealthy food consumption.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The study investigated how implicit religious, environmental, and neutral cues influence dietary choices, specifically, whether religious priming increases the likelihood of consuming healthy or unhealthy foods and how individuals' pro-environmental identity moderates this effect. The study further explores the role of mental health in shaping responses to these primes, hypothesizing that those with better mental health are more responsive due to stronger self-regulation. In contrast, individuals with lower mental health may show weaker behavioral changes. The research also considers whether religious cues can trigger moral licensing or compensatory behaviors, potentially leading to indulgent food choices. Across two experiments, the authors test interactions between priming, identity, and mental health to understand their combined effects on food consumption. The findings aim to inform interventions promoting healthier and more sustainable eating by aligning messages with identity and mental well-being.

Method And Data (Not Applicable For Nonempirical Papers)

Two experimental studies were conducted to examine how implicit priming (religious, environmental, or neutral), pro-environmental identity, and mental health influence healthy and unhealthy food consumption. In Study 1**,** 189 participants were recruited via social media and randomly assigned to either a religious or environmental priming condition using a sentence-scrambling task. After priming, they rated their likelihood of consuming either healthy or unhealthy foods. Pro-environmental identity and demographic data were also collected. Study 2 included 388 participants from MTurk, randomly assigned to religious or neutral priming conditions. Participants then rated their likelihood of eating healthy or unhealthy foods and reported their pro-environmental identity and current mental health. Both studies used moderated regression analyses to test two-way and three-way interaction effects among priming, identity, and mental health. Age and gender were included as control variables. The design enabled analysis of how identity alignment and psychological state affect responses to moral or

environmental cues in the context of food choices.

Summary of Findings

The findings across both studies reveal a complex interplay between priming type, pro-environmental identity, and mental health in shaping food consumption. In Study 1, religious priming significantly increased healthy food consumption compared to environmental priming, particularly among individuals with high pro-environmental identity. However, no significant effects were observed for unhealthy food consumption, suggesting that identity alignment amplifies moral cues primarily for virtuous behaviors. In Study 2, the inclusion of mental health as a moderator revealed that religious priming significantly influenced both healthy and unhealthy food choices, depending on participants' identity and mental well-being. Individuals with high pro-environmental identity and strong mental health showed the greatest increases in healthy food consumption under religious priming. Conversely, those with lower mental health demonstrated weaker responses, indicating reduced self-regulatory capacity. Interestingly, unhealthy food consumption was also influenced by moral licensing effects, where religious priming occasionally led to indulgence. These results highlight the conditional nature of priming effects and emphasize the roles of internal identity and psychological state. Overall, the study shows that religious cues can promote healthier choices, especially when aligned with identity and supported by good mental health, offering insights for targeted interventions in health and sustainability.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research makes several key contributions to the literature on priming, identity, and health behavior. First, it advances understanding of implicit priming by showing that religious cues can influence food consumption patterns, particularly when aligned with an individual's pro-environmental identity. This supports and extends identity-based motivation theory by demonstrating that value-congruent cues enhance behavioral responsiveness. Second, the study introduces mental health as a critical moderator in priming research, revealing that self-regulatory capacity significantly affects individuals' ability to respond to moral or environmental stimuli. This highlights the importance of psychological readiness in shaping health-related decisions. Third, the work distinguishes between effects on healthy versus unhealthy consumption, uncovering that priming and identity alignment are more effective in promoting healthy choices than curbing indulgent ones. This asymmetry provides new insight into moral licensing and compensatory behavior. Finally, the study offers actionable guidance for public health and sustainability interventions, suggesting that identity-aligned messages and mental health support can enhance the effectiveness of behavior change strategies. These contributions collectively deepen our understanding of how contextual cues and individual differences interact to influence everyday choices, with implications for policy, marketing, and health communication.

FALLING PREY: HOW VULNERABLE CONSUMERS USE CRYPTOCURRENCY TO CIRCUMVENT THE SYSTEM

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Keywords: Consumer Vulnerability; Cryptocurrency Marketing; Financial Decision-Making; Psychographic Segmentation; Regulatory Interventions

Description: This paper identifies a vulnerable consumer segment—PREY (**P**ositive about crypto, **R**isk-tolerant, **E**conomically challenged, and **Y**ounger)—and shows how targeted cryptocurrency marketing exploits their desire to circumvent traditional financial systems, while demonstrating that policy interventions can mitigate this susceptibility.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research investigates how cryptocurrency impacts vulnerable consumer populations, with a specific focus on identifying who is most susceptible and why. We ask: What motivates economically disadvantaged, risk-tolerant, younger consumers to adopt cryptocurrency, and how does marketing messaging influence their receptivity? Given the lack of consumer protections and volatility in crypto markets, we explore whether certain consumer segments are more vulnerable to harm. Our central question is whether—and how—cryptocurrency serves as a

perceived tool for circumventing traditional financial systems among these groups. We also test whether marketing messages that highlight a "break the system" narrative heighten interest among these consumers, and if targeted educational or legitimization-based policy interventions can reduce that susceptibility. The study introduces the PREY segment—**P**ositive about crypto, **R**isk-tolerant, **E**conomically challenged, and **Y**ounger—as especially relevant. Using a multi-method approach across four studies, we address both the segmentation and psychological motivations that drive this segment, as well as their behavioral receptivity to marketing and intervention tactics. By focusing on the intersection of financial vulnerability, messaging strategy, and regulatory response, this research offers insight into how marketing can both exploit and protect consumers in high-risk financial categories like cryptocurrency.

Method and Data

We use a multi-method empirical design across four studies. Study 1 conducts a segmentation analysis using a nationally representative sample (N = 1,010) to identify distinct cryptocurrency consumer groups via two-step cluster analysis. Variables included general attitudes toward cryptocurrency, current ownership, socioeconomic status, and demographics. Study 2 comprises 16 qualitative interviews with undergraduate students who share demographic overlap with the PREY segment. These semi-structured interviews provide first-person narratives about motivations, system distrust, and use cases of cryptocurrency as a means of system-circumvention. In Study 3, we test the effect of marketing messages using an experiment with 496 low-SES participants (via Prolific), manipulating ad framing ("Break the System" vs. "Future of Finance") and measuring receptivity and perceived circumvention value. Study 4 uses a larger sample (N = 749) in a 2 (advertising message) × 3 (intervention approach) between-

subjects experiment, adding two intervention conditions: one that frames crypto as legitimized by institutions and one that highlights crypto-related risks against a control. The dependent variable in both experiments is receptivity to cryptocurrency. Mediation analyses (PROCESS Model 4) test whether perceived circumvention mediates message effectiveness. Together, these studies provide converging evidence of the PREY segment's heightened susceptibility and the moderating impact of targeted policy interventions.

Summary of Findings

Across four studies, we find that a segment of cryptocurrency users—PREY (**P**ositive about crypto, **R**isk-tolerant, **E**conomically challenged, and **Y**ounger)—is particularly vulnerable to marketing messages that frame crypto as a way to circumvent traditional financial systems. In Study 1, PREY emerged as a distinct consumer segment, comprising 13.1% of the population and characterized by low financial literacy, system distrust, and economic precarity. Study 2 confirmed, via qualitative interviews, that these consumers perceive cryptocurrency as a tool to bypass restrictive financial institutions and engage in otherwise inaccessible behaviors, including gambling. In Study 3, experimental data showed that "Break the System" ads significantly increased receptivity to cryptocurrency among low-SES consumers compared to "Future of Finance" ads. This effect was mediated by perceptions of crypto as a circumvention tool. Study 4 showed that risk education reduced the impact of "Break the System" messaging, which nullified the ad's persuasive power. Across all studies, the PREY segment demonstrates both enthusiasm and vulnerability, suggesting they are especially susceptible to marketing appeals but also responsive to protective interventions. These findings highlight the dual role of marketing in exacerbating and potentially mitigating consumer harm.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to the marketing literature by identifying and characterizing the PREY consumer segment—those who are **P**ositive about crypto, **R**isk-tolerant, **E**conomically challenged, and **Y**ounger—as especially vulnerable to persuasive cryptocurrency marketing. Through segmentation, qualitative, and experimental methods, we demonstrate how psychographic factors such as institutional distrust and risk-seeking behaviors intersect with economic precarity to shape receptivity to crypto-related messaging. Theoretically, we extend research on consumer vulnerability and financial decision-making by showing that receptivity is not only a function of economic need but is also shaped by messaging that offers symbolic resistance to entrenched systems. We also empirically document the role of perceived circumvention as a psychological mediator of message effectiveness. From a methodological perspective, this work shows how multi-method research can map vulnerability across both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. Practically, the findings provide a blueprint for policymakers and consumer advocacy organizations to design interventions—such as risk education—that can meaningfully reduce marketing susceptibility. Marketers are also urged to adopt ethical frameworks when targeting vulnerable consumers. As crypto markets continue to evolve, this research offers a timely foundation for understanding and regulating how marketing can influence high-risk consumer behavior in financial frontier spaces.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN KAZAKHSTAN: PRESENCE OF LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND NATIONAL BRANDS IN THE RETAIL SECTOR

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Keywords: food sovereignty, national food brands, locally produced food, Kazakhstan

Description: Current research investigates food sovereignty by analyzing the presence of locally produced finished food categories and national brands in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The author based the research on a human rights-based approach, asserting that governmental policies must be developed and implemented to uphold the right to food, as enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal 2, a principal human right recognized by the UN. Food sovereignty refers to the production and provision of diverse products generated domestically within a country. Some experts have argued that food sovereignty metrics should also encompass the accessibility of finished products in the retail sector (Wilhelmina Quaye et al., 2013). The study examines food sovereignty through the lens of domestically produced food products and the ratio of food brands from local enterprises. The writer anticipates a greater proportion of Kazakhstan brands on shop shelves in food categories, which would signify an adequate level of food sovereignty. At the same time, a presence

below fifty percent, and according to some experts, even below eighty percent (Erseitova et al., 2017), would imply the contrary. The subsequent research questions were formulated: 1) What is the proportion of national brands among specific food and beverage categories in the examined retail establishments? 2) What percentage of international brands are produced in Kazakhstan? 3) What is the proportion of infant food manufactured in Kazakhstan?

Method And Data

A descriptive research methodology was chosen to investigate the dynamics between domestic and international producers and brand supremacy. Data regarding brand assortment, country of production, and producer's place of origin were gathered across twelve categories and subcategories of food and beverages. The categories encompassed dairy items, including milk (both fresh and condensed), sour cream, yogurt, tea (loose leaf and bagged), soft drinks, bottled water, chocolate bars, juice, pasta, cookies, waffles, and cereals. The investigation encompassed baby food, comprising juice, oatmeal, puree, and milk formula. Information regarding the company, country of origin (COO), and country of production (COP) was gathered for each brand in the retail shop. Traditionally, bread, cereals, dairy products, and tea have been recognized as the primary components of local cuisine. The author took into account the average expenditure on food categories (Euromonitor, 2017). Data were collected in Almaty city from six distinct modern trade entities, including retail chains, independent food outlets, and gourmet shops, at the commencement of 2018. Data was gathered for the second time in November 2024 to assess the alterations in the representation of Kazakhstani brands relative to international brands, as well as the COO and COP within the chosen food and beverage categories.

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that in limited categories, the proportion of products manufactured in Kazakhstan approaches or exceeds fifty percent: 58.7 percent of milk, 78.2 percent of sour cream, 46.2 percent of yogurt, 76.9 percent of still water, and 41.2 percent of mineral water brands were produced in Kazakhstan, with the majority being owned by Kazakhstani companies. The proportion of local goods was low in some groups: 31.9 percent of packaged tea, 31.7 percent of cookies and biscuits, and the same 31.7 percent of items were created in Russia. The domestically produced pasta accounted for only 27.5 percent.

A limited quantity of national brands across many categories, excluding dairy goods, was observed. The groupings of milk (58.7 percent), sour cream (78.2 percent), and still water (73.1 percent) exhibited a prevalence of national brands. The biscuits and cookies set comprised 24.8 percent of state brands. Mineral water, carbonated beverages, and juice accounted for 38.2%, 34.9%, and 25.5%, respectively. Pasta and cereals, categories of daily consumption for consumers in Kazakhstan, comprised 27.5% and 4.3% of local brands, respectively. The porridge category comprised 15.2 percent. Baby food subcategories lacked a single national brand, and no locally made products existed.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

This paper examines the relationship between food sovereignty and the availability of national processed food items and national produce brands in retail settings of Kazakhstan's largest city. Although Kazakhstan is among the world's leading producers of wheat and exporters of various grains, beef, and poultry, it continues to be a commodity provider while importing substantial quantities of processed food and beverages from outside (Kaliyev and Moldashev

2021).

The writer anticipates that the significance of the food sovereignty topic will draw the attention of governmental agencies and policymakers to the paper. Imported produce generally commands a higher price and exhibits worse quality due to the preservatives employed to prolong shelf life. The price level diminishes purchasing power, and the presence of several preservatives in processed food has an adverse effect on public health.

Enhancing the presence of local food brands could boost national pride and improve food sovereignty among the urban population. By fostering partnerships between local producers and retailers, policymakers can help create a more sustainable food supply chain system that prioritizes local resources and meets consumer needs. This potential for positive change should inspire optimism and motivate stakeholders to take action.

References are available upon request.

FOSTERING HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN (HCD) APPROACH IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

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Keywords: Human-Centered Design, Cross-Sector Collaboration, Social Impact, Community

Description: This study examines the challenges of applying human-centered design in cross-sector collaborations, revealing that systemic barriers, such as misaligned goals, power imbalances, and limited community representation, undermine efforts to develop authentic, community-driven solutions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Cross-sector collaboration opens up avenues to address "wicked problems" such as food insecurity (Bublitz et al., 2011; Bublitz et al., 2019), intergenerational effects of poverty (Hosany & Hamilton, 2023; Upadhyaya et al., 2021), gun violence (Huff et al., 2017; Barnhart et al., 2018; Shepherd & Kay, 2018), public health (Raftery et al., 2022; Mende et al., 2023). Tackling such complex problems requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders, which can be fostered through collaborative governance regimes (Emerson et al., 2012), leading to community-driven, innovative solutions (Kania & Kramer, 2011). However, challenges remain in developing a shared vision, aligning diverse goals, agreeing on leadership styles, and incorporating community voices, especially when adopting human-centered design (HCD) approaches. While HCD is often assumed to be embedded in collaborative efforts, sectoral differences in values, resources, practices, and institutional priorities lead to power asymmetries that reduce inclusivity. Further, leadership that cannot foster trust and mediate between collaborators and competing interests hinders collaborative efforts. To further understand these complexities, this research is guided by the following research questions: (RQ1) What factors influence the Human-Centered Design approach in cross-sector collaborations? (RQ2) What strategies can help address these barriers to maximize social impact? How can marketing researchers support these strategies?

METHOD AND DATA

This research study involves ten semi-structured, in-depth interviews with expert stakeholders across various sectors to unpack the complexities of integrating the HCD approach in cross-sector collaborations. The interviews began with "grand tour" questions (McCracken, 1988),

including questions about respondents' personal and professional backgrounds, followed by specific questions about their experience collaborating with different sectors to address a wicked problem. The interviews were conducted in English and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews lasted between 60 minutes to 90 minutes. The authors manually analyzed 182 pages of transcribed interviews. This open coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) enabled the researcher to identify numerous emergent themes and organize the codes into meaningful categories. During the next level of data analysis, the authors further refined and developed the thematic categories by moving back and forth between the data sets and the literature (Belk et al., 2013; Spiggle, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify theoretical frameworks relevant in explaining the emergent interrelationships between the categories.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study identifies three major complexities that hinder the effective use of Human-Centered Design (HCD) in cross-sector collaborations: *misaligned goals, power imbalances, and bureaucratic constraints*. Misaligned goals are often rooted in sectoral silos and a lack of a shared institutional vision, which can result in duplication of efforts and fragmented solutions. Even when stakeholders have overlapping objectives, a lack of proper coordination prevents coordinated community-driven action. Similarly, power imbalances arise when dominant organizations - typically those with greater resources and influence - marginalize the voices of community-based groups that hold ground-level insights. Despite formal commitments to representation, many collaborations fall short of genuinely incorporating community voices into decision-making. Finally, bureaucratic rigidity, especially within the public sector, impedes the iterative and adaptive nature of HCD. Complex approval processes and risk aversion, particularly in high-stakes projects like affordable housing, slow progress and discourage innovation.

Collectively, these systemic challenges reveal that successful implementation of HCD requires not only methodological rigor but also structural and cultural shifts to support equitable partnerships, meaningful community inclusion, and process flexibility.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

While HCD emphasizes the centering of community voices, empathy, and community-driven solutions, its application in cross-sector collaborative environments can create unique challenges. This research enriches the marketing literature by exploring how Human-Centered Design (HCD) can be adapted in cross-sector collaborations to foster a shared vision, mitigate power imbalances, build open communication channels, and incorporate community voices. By highlighting barriers such as power imbalances, systemic rigidity, and misalignment of goals, this research offers a new lens for marketing scholars to understand the obstacles to operationalizing Human-Centered Design (HCD) within cross-sector initiatives. For non-profits and governmental agencies, the power dynamics and community engagement insights offer actionable guidance on fostering equitable and inclusive collaborations. Policymakers can leverage these findings to create frameworks that support adaptive, community-centered approaches in program development, particularly in areas like public health, housing, and environmental sustainability. For private firms, especially those engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR), the research highlights the importance of integrating empathy and stakeholder-centric strategies to build trust and enhance brand authenticity in cross-sector partnerships. By adopting the recommendations from this study, these stakeholders can enhance their capacity to design impactful, community-focused interventions that resonate with end-users, thereby creating lasting social value.

References are available upon request.

FROM SATISFACTION TO SUSTAINABILITY: INTRODUCING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER WELL-BEING.

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Keywords: sustainability, consumer well-being, flourishing, transformative consumer research.

Description: This paper introduces *sustainable consumer well-being* (sCWB), defined as a dynamic equilibrium between individual, social, and environmental interactions in the marketplace, where individual thriving today does not compromise the ability of others, the planet, or future generations to thrive.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Global sustainability challenges necessitate a reevaluation of consumer well-being. We build on existing models to offer a sustainability-informed perspective uniting different stakeholders behind a new vision of success. Inspired by Félix Guattari's philosophy of three ecologies, we propose *sustainable consumer well-being* (sCWB), defined as a dynamic equilibrium between individual, social, and environmental interactions in the marketplace, where individual thriving today does not compromise the ability of others, the planet, or future generations to thrive. We figuratively represent sCWB as a triple helix, drawing an analogy to the unique properties of helical design to illustrate the complex and dynamic relationship between the three ecologies. We also introduce the sCWB Matrix, a multidimensional space to identify and analyze damaging versus supportive marketplace activities within each ecology. Interconnected nodes link the triple helix structure, serving to store matrix information and identify ecological conflicts and synergies. In positioning consumer well-being as a sustainability issue, and sustainability as a well-being issue, sCWB offers an ambitious, transdisciplinary framework to balance individual prosperity with broader ecological stewardship. Pursuing sCWB requires coordinated action across the micro, meso, and macro levels of the marketplace. Guiding principles for consumers, organizations and public policy are identified. Future research should develop and refine the sCWB framework with the goal of driving widespread adoption.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretical: Our work builds on the CWB literature to align with contemporary theorizing in the broader well-being field and answer calls for transdisciplinary models that integrate sustainability and well-being (Davies et al., 2020; Mead et al., 2021; O'Mahony, 2022;

van Agteren et al., 2021). By embedding consumer well-being within sustainability, we provide a novel way for the marketing discipline to reconsider its role in a post-growth society (Rémy et al., 2024) and help achieve a better, more sustainable, world (Mende & Scott, 2021). The proposed bivariate measurement structure of the sCWB Matrix also contributes to ongoing debates about whether value co-creation and co-destruction are single or differentiated concepts (Alexander & Vallström, 2023; Lumivalo et al., 2024).

Managerial: We propose a radical reconsideration of how companies engage in, and report on, sustainability efforts that puts the well-being of consumers and the environment alongside the pursuit of profit. While CWB is the oft stated goal of marketing activities, current financial and sustainability reporting structures omit transparent measures. sCWB proposes a new tripartite reporting structure that emphasizes holistic individual well-being, alongside social and environmental. To help individuals and policymakers assess the consequences of consumption choices, our model requires firms to independently assess the value and damage resulting from their activities in all three areas. The sCWB Matrix serves as a tool to help direct marketplace solutions.

Policy: Current laws around individual, social and environmental business practices are formulated reactively to remedy existing harms or injustices. In contrast, sCWB demonstrates the need for sustainability regulation to also include predictive and regenerative approaches that puts the onus on business to restore ecosystems, social equity, and biodiversity. Current policymaking also treats each ecology independently, overlooking the consequences in other ecologies. sCWB promotes a systems perspective that considers the three ecologies together.

HEALTH DATA PRIVACY AND CONSUMER NORM CONCESSIONS

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Keywords: privacy, health data, reciprocity norms, concessions, tiered transparency

Description: Through a lens of relationships and reciprocity norms, this research offers a nuanced approach to how companies and consumers might negotiate privacy concerns through what the authors term tiered transparency.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The marketplace for data is driven by the intention to know each customer so well that market offerings can be personalized and uniquely customized. Ironically, when it comes to the way these same customers learn about how their personal information is collected, stored, and exchanged, companies have adopted a legally-standardized, uniform disclosure approach. This contradiction challenges the realization of genuine transparency around consumer privacy. We address this incongruity through a lens of relationships and reciprocity norms. We explore equity, fairness, honesty, respect, and trust and the assumption they exist in privacy communication around digital exchanges, questioning whether they are evident to consumers.

LaBarge et al. (2022) proposed a digital exchange compromises framework wherein consumers', organizations', and policy maker's perceptions and actions in the digital environment are affected and governed by reciprocal norms: fundamental, societally-informed norms that balance the exercise of power by stakeholders. Our work tackles the intersection between privacy and reciprocity norms, illuminating artificial choices consumers face and their coping strategies, and proposing recommendations for remedying this complex problem. In this research, we: (1) examine how consumers perceive reciprocity norms in the context of digital exchanges, and (2) explore if and how these norms affect consumers' privacy-related behaviors.

Method and Data

Health-related exchanges, such as fitness trackers and healthcare portals, are the research context due to their importance in consumers' lives, potential to impact well-being, prevalence in society,

and storied history (Skloot 2011). A phenomenological approach (Thompson et al.1989) elicited lived experiences with online exchange and privacy via twenty-two depth interviews focusing on internet and device consumption habits; data privacy expectations and norms; health-related digital services; and privacy breaches. Following general questions, participants were presented examples of a privacy policy or a data breach notification and asked to discuss perceived norms; we focused on equity, fairness, honesty, respect and trust to empirically test a portion of LaBarge and colleagues' (2022) conceptual model. Two independent coders analyzed the data in three stages (Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets 2013): (1) reading in-depth for key ideas, (2) identifying emerging themes, and (3) elevating themes to theoretical contributions. Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 2017), the independent coders went back and forth between literature and data, seeking connections between major emergent themes. Following deep reading, the coders periodically discussed findings to identify commonalities. A detailed list of first- and second order codes was maintained until themes coalesced into a data structure.

Summary of Findings

In exploring the intersection of data privacy and reciprocity norms, three major themes emerged: (1) Artificial Choice (where we exist), (2) Rationalizing and Adopting a Lackadaisical Approach (how we respond/cope), and (3) Meaningful Transparency and Humanization, grounded in Reciprocity Norms (where we would prefer to exist). Consumers believe they exist in a space of artificial choice—despite being presented with data privacy options, their "choice" is superficial. Although reciprocity norms are assumed in privacy communication, they are not always evident to consumers. Consumers respond with two primary coping strategies: rationalizing their behavior and operating with a lackadaisical attitude. Despite their captivity to these unbalanced exchanges and their "surrendering" behaviors (Walker 2016), we find consumers desire transparency and humanization in privacy exchanges, supported by reciprocity norms of trust, honesty, and respect. Consumers want to feel humanized in digital exchanges. This manifests as wanting: to understand and be understood, to be treated with respect, to be spoken to with compassion, to be treated like an individual, and to be provided authentic choice. Participants consistently returned to the concept of meaningful transparency as the pinnacle of desirable data exchange, both grounded in and central to reciprocity norms.

Key Contributions

Although companies offer customers information about data collection, storage, and sharing, customers desire more choice and understanding. They want meaningful power and communication: not simply to check a box but to be genuinely empowered. Our findings indicate organizations need to move towards tiered (meaningful) transparency: providing consumers with information that is relevant, digestible, and clear, recognizing the variance in consumer knowledge and information needs. Offering flexibility, allowing for opt in/out options, and diminishing complexity in privacy options moves towards integrating consumers' voices into privacy decisions that affect their personal data. Moving towards such meaningful transparency

reduces consumers' risks and concessions (LaBarge et al. 2022), and addresses the dehumanization consumers perceive in digital exchanges

Moving toward humanization and meaningful transparency in digital exchange not only empowers consumers, but is also a powerful firm competitive advantage. If organizations (re)incorporate the human element of service into digital offerings (humanization) and empower consumers to make informed decisions with digestible, accessible information (meaningful transparency) with the option for consumers to choose between different levels of privacy information based on individual needs (tiered transparency), they can differentiate themselves as leaders who care about consumers' agency and privacy rights. This opens the door to future research.

References available upon request.

Hey, Look at My Metal Credit Card:

The Influence of Credit Card Material on Consumers' Spending Intentions

Abstract

Metal credit cards have become much more common in the marketplace in the past few years. Do such metal credit cards influence consumer spending differently than traditional plastic credit cards, and if so, why? Across four studies, including behavioral experiments with physiological measurement, our research documents several major findings in answering these questions. First, we find that metal (vs. plastic) credit cards significantly increase consumers' spending intentions. Second, we show that the positive effect of metal (vs. plastic) credit cards on consumers' spending intentions is driven by heightened status perceptions. Third, we demonstrate that consumer religiosity moderates the positive effect of metal credit cards on spending intentions, such that it manifests for consumers high (vs. low) in religiosity. Finally, we provide physiological evidence for the observed effects by showing that metal (vs. plastic) credit cards decrease consumers' pulse rate variability and increase their spending intentions.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research provides novel contributions to the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Wegener, 1999) to show how consumers rely on aesthetic cues (specifically material type of metal vs. plastic) in consideration of high involvement products. Prior research suggests that the peripheral route to the elaboration likelihood model is most commonly used with low involvement products, while the central route is more common for high involvement products (Homer & Kahle, 1990; Shahab et al., 2021). We provide evidence that this is not always the case as the peripheral cue of material type is influential for the high involvement product of a credit card.

Additionally, we contribute to the literature on aesthetic information, which has primarily examined how aesthetic product features influence evaluation of solely product attributes (Crolic et al., 2019). We extend this line of research to show that aesthetic information related to material type can also influence subsequent consumer behaviors in the form of spending in various contexts. Importantly, we show this through both spending intentions as well as physiological arousal with pulse rate variability data to provide greater evidence for aesthetic influences.

We also made several practical contributions to marketers, public policy officials, and consumers. First, given that our research demonstrates that metal credit cards increase consumers' spending intentions compared to traditional plastic credit cards, marketers in the credit card industry should certainly be offering metal credit cards to their consumers. Moreover, given the exorbitant levels of credit card debt, it would be wise for public policy officials to warn consumers about the potential pitfalls that come with metal credit cards. Public policy officials may want to regulate the promotion of such metal credit cards by requiring credit card

companies to disclose the likely spending increases that these cards may engender before

consumers select a metal credit card.

How Do Changes to Manufacturer-Backed Warranties Impact Demand for Extended Warranties?

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Keywords: Product warranty, Risk preference, Durable goods, Automobile industry, Econometrics

Description: We examine how manufacturer-backed and extended warranties interact in consumer choice and find that risk-averse consumers treat these warranty types as complements rather than substitutes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the global extended warranty market's projected growth to $170 billion by 2027 and the U.S. auto extended warranty market reaching $59 billion (Allied Market Research 2020), no empirical study has examined how manufacturer-backed and extended warranties interact within an integrated demand framework. This research addresses Chu and Chintagunta's (2011) call to understand "how base warranties and extended warranties interact with each other and how manufacturers assign their resources across these two markets." We investigate two critical questions: (1) Do consumers view manufacturer-backed and extended warranties as substitutes or complements? (2) How do changes in manufacturer-backed warranty terms affect demand for various extended warranty options? The study is motivated by real industry events, such as GM's 2015 decision to reduce powertrain coverage from 100,000 to 60,000 miles and similar moves by Chrysler. While dealers anticipated increased extended warranty sales following these reductions, the actual market response depends on consumer risk preferences and whether highly risk-averse buyers switch to competitors offering more comprehensive base warranties.

Method and Data

We develop a unified structural econometric demand model that simultaneously considers both manufacturer-backed and extended warranties, extending Cohen and Einav's (2007) framework to accommodate optional extended warranty purchases. Our model assumes consumers are expected-utility maximizers whose warranty decisions depend on their coefficient of absolute risk aversion and individual claim rates. We impose minimal structure on utility

functions, requiring only that they be smooth, monotone, state-independent, with negligible third derivatives. The identification strategy leverages the insight that observed extended warranty choices reveal information about individual risk aversion coefficients. When consumers choose specific warranty options, their risk aversion falls between calculable indifference points, allowing us to estimate the distribution of risk preferences while accounting for adverse selection through unobserved heterogeneity in both risk types and risk aversion. We model repair claims as following a Poisson process, assuming consumers have perfect information about their claim rates for expected utility calculations

We obtained four databases from a major auto-industry research firm covering 135,813 vehicle transactions and 672,478 repair histories across five southeastern states (2009-2014). Data include transaction details, VIN-specific attributes, manufacturer warranty terms, extended warranty options, and complete repair costs. Our final estimation sample contains 4,429 transactions across 14 dealerships and 16 brands.

Summary of Findings

Our analysis reveals that risk-averse consumers treat manufacturer-backed and extended warranties as complements rather than substitutes. Risk-averse buyers endogenously self-select into vehicles with comprehensive factory warranties and are simultaneously more likely to purchase extended warranties, with the most risk-averse consumers choosing both the most comprehensive factory warranties and the most extensive extended warranty coverage. This complementary relationship has significant implications for warranty policy changes. Counterfactual analyses demonstrate that increasing bumper-to-bumper warranty coverage by 5,000 miles could generate $933,970 in incremental revenue for underwriters. Additionally, we

find substantial heterogeneity in consumer risk preferences that is highly skewed, creating pricing opportunities for extended warranty underwriters. Our results suggest that increasing regular extended warranty prices by 15% would maximize revenues for underwriters. These findings indicate that reducing manufacturer-backed warranties may decrease rather than increase extended warranty demand, as risk-averse consumers may switch to competitors offering more comprehensive base coverage.

Summary of Key Contributions

This study makes three key contributions to warranty literature. First, we provide the integrated empirical analysis that examines both manufacturer-backed and extended warranties within a unified structural econometric demand model. Second, we advance the methodology by extending Cohen and Einav's (2007) framework to analyze extended warranty menu choices. We estimate consumer risk preferences while accounting for adverse selection through unobserved heterogeneity in both risk types and risk aversion. Third, we offer new empirical evidence on whether consumers view these warranty types as substitutes or complements. We find that risk-averse consumers treat them as complements. Our counterfactual analyses examine the financial implications of warranty policy changes and show how reductions in manufacturer-backed warranties can affect both vehicle sales and extended warranty demand. These findings provide practical insights for automakers and warranty underwriters regarding warranty design and pricing strategies in the automobile industry.

HOW DOES COMPANY SIZE AFFECT CONSUMER SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VERSUS SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REGULATION?

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Keywords: Company size, sustainability dimension, Sustainable Development Goals, interventions, regulation

Description: This research explores the effect of company size (through mechanisms causality and capacity) and sustainability dimension on whether consumers hold companies responsible for the SDGs and support sustainability regulation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Businesses are being called upon to enable sustainable progress (UN 2021), and indeed, some companies are recognizing the need to operate more sustainably, working towards sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Stern 2000). Yet, not all companies undertake sustainability initiatives and governments may turn to regulation to encourage SDG progress. While sustainability regulations relating to businesses have been adopted around the world, consumer support for such regulation is variable: some consumers hold companies responsible and demand regulation (Pew Research Center 2012), but other consumers push back against such regulation (Livermore and Schwartz 2014; Shapiro and Borie-Holtz 2020).

This research investigates consumer support for sustainability regulation as a function of company size and sustainability dimension. We theorize consumers judge large (vs. small-to-medium) companies as more responsible due to greater perceptions of causality – which, in turn, extends to greater regulation support. We further theorize a moderating role of sustainability dimension such that consumers judge greater responsibility for environmental sustainability to large (vs. small-to-medium) companies—but this is attenuated for social sustainability. We also predict company size difference is attenuated by causality and capacity interventions.

Method And Data

Five experiments examine regulation support for social and environmental sustainability. Studies 1A and 1B manipulate company size and sustainability dimension orthogonally to examine their joint effects on consumer judgments of company responsibility and regulation support. Study 1A showed participants a social media advertisement and

Study 1B showed participants a fictional coffee company. In both studies, participants reported responsibility judgments, regulation support, and then a consequential measure to allocate money to non-profit organizations with descriptions emphasizing either social or environmental sustainability regulation.

In Study 2 participants read a description of each SDG, indicated regulation support being applied to (1) small-to-medium firms, (2) large firms, (3) neither, or (4) both, and then sorted the SDGs into social, environmental, or economic categories.

For Study 3A, participants viewed a video intervention that emphasized the capacity and causality of one of the following: small-to-medium companies, large companies, or companies in general, then indicated responsibility judgments and regulation support for both large and small-to-medium companies, and perceptions of believability. Study 3B tested a text-based intervention with five cells (four interventions vs. one control). Each intervention contained information about capacity and causality with different presentation styles. After reading, participants indicated responsibility judgments and regulation support.

Summary of Findings

Study 1A revealed a significant interaction effect of company size and sustainability dimension on responsibility judgments ($F(1, 401) = 13.46$, $p = .0003$) and regulation support ($F(1, 401) = 13.40$, $p < .0001$). For environmental sustainability, both responsibility judgments and regulation support were significantly greater for large vs. small companies. The pattern was the same in Study 1B.

For Study 2, company size and dimension interaction was significant ($F(1,282) = 35.01$, $p < 0.0001$); there was greater support for regulation of large (vs. small-to-medium) companies, more so for environmental SDGs than social SDGs.

Study 3A found, when controlling for believability, a significant two-way interaction between company size and sustainability dimension ($F(1,588) = 391.92$, $p < 0.0001$), such that for small companies, responsibility judgments were higher following the small-to-medium intervention (M = 5.46) compared to the large intervention (M = 4.89) and control (M = 5.17) (respectively, $t(588) = -4.24$, $p < 0.0001$; $t(588) = -2.20$, $p = 0.03$; other contrasts omitted). Study 3B replicated the pattern of interventions focused on small-to-medium company capacity and causality increasing responsibility judgments and regulation support (details omitted for brevity).

Statement of Key Contributions

First we demonstrate systematic differences in regulation support as a function of company size, building upon prior research on company size impacts on purchase behavior (Thompson and Arsel 2004; Yang and Aggarwal 2019). We find consumers judge large (vs. small-to-medium) companies as more responsible for the SDGs, driving regulation support. We reveal two underlying mechanisms: causality and capacity. Second, we demonstrate responsibility judgments are sensitive to sustainability dimension, extending prior work regarding this distinction (Catlin, Luchs, and Phipps 2017). Consumer support of environmental sustainability regulation falls more upon large companies than does their social regulation support.

From a practice perspective, we offer guidance to policymakers. We show consumers are generally more supportive of regulation for large companies, however, there are situations when it is vital for regulators to target all companies. Interventions targeting perceptions of company causality and capacity can be effective at shifting judgments of responsibility and support for regulation. More broadly, media coverage of large and successful companies represents a double-edged sword for companies: it can enhance their reputation and capacity

perceptions but at a cost in terms of sustainability responsibility. Such beliefs may relieve

some of the responsibility on smaller companies – to the detriment of sustainability progress.

HOW FATAL SCHOOL SHOOTINGS IMPACT A COMMUNITY'S CONSUMPTION

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Keywords: School Shootings, Trauma, Anxiety, Grocery Retail, Political Ideology

Description: This study examines the economic impact of fatal school shootings on community consumption, showing that grocery purchases decline significantly, particularly in liberal-leaning areas, due to heightened anxiety about public spaces.

Extended Abstract

Research Question

School shootings in the United States have devastating direct consequences, but their broader community-wide effects remain under explored. This study investigates how fatal school shootings impact household consumption behavior. Specifically, we ask: (1) Do fatal school shootings lead to measurable changes in grocery shopping behavior in affected communities? (2) If so, what mechanisms drive this change? (3) Does political ideology moderate the extent of this effect?

Using a combination of empirical and experimental studies, we find that fatal school shootings decrease grocery purchases by approximately 1.35% in affected counties, with a more pronounced decline of 2.62% in liberal-leaning areas. We theorize that heightened anxiety

about public spaces drives this reduction. To test this, we conduct controlled experiments assessing how exposure to school shooting tragedies influences self-reported anxiety and willingness to engage in public consumption activities. The findings suggest that anxiety—rather than sadness, guilt, or mortality salience—explains the observed reduction in consumption. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on how traumatic public events influence economic behaviors and how responses differ based on political ideology.

Method and Data

We employ a multi-method approach, combining observational data analysis with controlled experiments. First, we analyze household grocery purchase data from the NielsenIQ Homescan Panel, covering 63 fatal school shooting incidents between 2012 and 2019. We apply a difference-in-differences (DiD) regression approach to compare changes in grocery spending before and after each incident, using prior-year purchases as a placebo control. We further segment results based on political ideology, using county-level presidential election results as a proxy.

To identify underlying psychological mechanisms, we conduct three experimental studies. In Study 2, 301 participants are randomly assigned to imagine living in a community that recently experienced either a school shooting or a motor vehicle accident. We measure their likelihood of engaging in public consumption and analyze their open-ended responses for anxiety-related language. In Study 3, a larger sample of 1,011 participants completes similar measures while also providing self-reported anxiety scores. Study 4 replicates these findings using a nationally representative sample and explores political ideology as a moderator. Across all studies, we find that anxiety—rather than sadness, mortality salience, or shame—mediates the observed reduction in consumption.

Summary of Findings

Our results indicate that fatal school shootings have a significant negative impact on household grocery spending. In affected communities, grocery purchases decline by approximately 1.35% over the six months following an incident. This effect is stronger in liberal-leaning

counties, where spending declines by 2.62%, compared to a non-significant 0.59% decline in conservative-leaning counties. We also find that affected households reduce their number of shopping trips, store visits, and department selections, suggesting that anxiety about public spaces drives these changes.

Experimental evidence supports this anxiety-based explanation. Participants exposed to a school shooting tragedy exhibit significantly lower willingness to engage in public consumption activities compared to those exposed to a motor vehicle accident. Text analysis of open-ended responses reveals higher anxiety-related language in the school shooting condition. Further studies using self-reported anxiety measures confirm that heightened anxiety mediates the relationship between school shootings and reduced consumption.

We also examine alternative explanations, including emotional coping mechanisms such as increased consumption of unhealthy foods. Contrary to expectations, we find no evidence that affected households increase their intake of sugar or processed foods following a shooting. These findings underscore the economic consequences of school shootings and the need for supportive community responses.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study makes three key contributions. First, it extends research on the economic effects of traumatic events by providing empirical evidence that fatal school shootings reduce household consumption in affected communities. While prior research has focused on direct psychological and educational impacts, our study highlights broader economic disruptions. The estimated 1.35% decline in grocery purchases, particularly the 2.62% drop in liberal-leaning counties, suggests that these events have material economic consequences, potentially affecting local businesses and employment.

Second, we contribute to consumer behavior literature by demonstrating how anxiety influences purchasing decisions following public tragedies. Using a combination of observational and experimental data, we isolate anxiety—rather than sadness, guilt, or mortality salience—as the primary mechanism driving reduced consumption. This finding informs broader discussions on how fear-based emotions shape consumer activity in response to traumatic events.

Finally, our study sheds light on the role of political ideology in moderating economic responses to school shootings. While all communities experience some economic impact, liberal-leaning areas exhibit stronger reactions, potentially due to differing perceptions of gun violence and public safety. These insights have policy implications, emphasizing the need for targeted community support and economic recovery initiatives in the aftermath of school shootings.

IMPERFECT YET CHERISHED: HOW NOSTALGIA INCREASES ACCEPTANCE OF UNATTRACTIVE PRODUCE

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Keywords: nostalgia, unattractive produce, tolerance

Description: Evoking nostalgia can increase consumers' acceptance of unattractive and imperfect produce, with consumer tolerance mediating such a positive effect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Unattractive produce refers to fruits and vegetables that do not match retail aesthetic standards due to misshapes, odd colors, abnormal sizes, or surface blemishes (Bunn et al., 1990). Due to its "ugly" appearance, 25% of produce is discarded by consumers and rejected by retailers (Kummu et al., 2012; Swinford, 2013). Despite their appearance, the unattractive produce is just as nutritious and safe as its visually more attractive counterparts (Grewal et al., 2019). However, consumers continue to expect perfect-looking produce (Walmsley 2017), and retailers also refuse to sell agricultural products that deviate from aesthetic norms (Block et al., 2016).

Researchers have explored strategies to reduce negative consumer responses to unattractive produce. For instance, Cooremans and Geuens (2009) recommended anthropomorphizing such items; Mookerjee et al. (2021) advocated using "ugly" labels; and Niu et al. (2023) suggested leveraging implicit beliefs that "unattractive = natural." Building on this work, we propose a novel emotional strategy: evoking nostalgia to enhance acceptance of unattractive produce. Drawing from research on nostalgia (e.g., Lasaleta et al., 2014) and tolerance (e.g., Chan et al., 2009), we propose that activating nostalgia in consumers can enhance the acceptance of unattractive produce by increasing their tolerance.

Method And Data

In Study 1, 151 undergraduates were randomly assigned to recall a nostalgic or ordinary event, then rated their purchase intention for unattractive produce in a grocery context. Study 2 is a 2 (nostalgia vs. control) × 2 (misshapen vs. regular potatoes) between-

subjects design. 295 online participants evaluated the likelihood of purchasing. Study 3 evaluated 119 undergraduates' willingness to support an ugly produce campaign and tolerance.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 found that participants in the nostalgia condition ($M_{nostalgia}$ =4.68, SD=1.54) were more likely to buy the unattractive produce than those in the control condition ($M_{control}$ = 4.00, SD=1.62; F (1, 149) = 6.90, p = .01, η_p^2 = .044). Study 2 showed a significant interaction effect (p = .01). Participants in the nostalgia condition showed a significantly higher preference for misshapen potato chips ($M_{nostalgia}$ = 5.61, SD=.91; $M_{control}$ = 4.96, SD=1.58; F (1, 143) = 9.60, p = .002, η_p^2= .06). Study 3 showed that nostalgic participants ($M_{nostalgia}$ = 3.83, SD=1.73) tended to share on social media more than those in the control condition ($M_{control}$ = 3.07, SD=1.73; F (1, 117) = 4.82, p= .030, η_p^2 = .04). Meanwhile, the increased tolerance mediated the effect (b =.18, SE =.11, 95% CI = [.0112, .4249]).

In sum, three studies show that nostalgia can serve as an effective strategy for increasing consumers' acceptance of unattractive produce. Study 1 shows that evoking nostalgic feelings by asking consumers to recall nostalgic experiences makes them more likely to purchase imperfect vegetables and fruits. Study 2 demonstrates that nostalgia increases consumers' purchase intentions of snacks made from unattractive produce. Study 3 not only shows that nostalgia encourages engagement with and support of an unattractive produce campaign on social media, but also demonstrates that the positive effect of nostalgia is driven by an overall enhancement in consumer tolerance (Study 3). Together, these studies highlight nostalgia as a powerful tool for promoting acceptance of unattractive produce.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research advances understanding of consumer acceptance of unattractive produce by introducing nostalgia as an effective strategy to increase consumer acceptance of such produce. Unlike prior approaches, such as anthropomorphizing produce or using "ugly" labels (Cooremans & Geuens, 2009; Grewal et al., 2019), nostalgia mitigates bias and leads consumers to value unattractive produce more than its aesthetically perfect counterparts.

Additionally, this study extends nostalgia research by extending it to the context of food waste and consumer attitudes toward unattractive produce. It broadens its established positive effects (e.g., fostering empathy, enhancing patience, reducing materialism; Zhou et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2016; Lasaleta et al., 2014). This research reveals a new mechanism associated with nostalgia: nostalgia enhances consumer tolerance.

This research also offers valuable insights for both marketers and policymakers. Marketers can harness nostalgia in various ways, such as through nostalgic music, retro packaging, or themed advertisements, to increase consumer acceptance of unattractive

produce.

For policymakers, nostalgia-based public campaigns provide a straightforward yet impactful tool to shift consumer attitudes toward unattractive produce. By enhancing consumer preference for "ugly" produce, our research contributes to rescuing such products, supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 12.3 on reducing food waste.

References

References available upon request.

**IS MY ONLINE FINANCIAL INFORMATION SAFE?
NAVIGATING CONSUMER DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS IN A DIGITAL RETAIL
ENVIRONMENT**

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Keywords: data privacy, financial information, psychological contract violations, multi-
methods, consumer behavior

Description: Grounded in the theory of psychological contract violations, two studies
(interviews and experiment) were conducted to evaluate online privacy definitions and consumer
data privacy concerns for online financial information.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

- What concerns about online privacy do consumers have when using technology?

- What factors affect the perceptions of psychological contract violations when an online

  privacy breach occurs with financial information?

Method And Data

The first exploratory qualitative study involved structured interviews with 20 participants,

representing Baby Boomers (4), Generation X (6), Millennials (5), and Generation Z (5).

Structured interviews explored their perceptions of the following topic areas: technology usage,

privacy definitions, general privacy concern, and situational privacy concerns. Trained graduate

students conducted the interviews in Teams or Zoom, recording and transcribing the audio. These transcripts formed the data set.

Based on the findings in the first study, a second study assessed consumers' perceptions of a financial privacy breach and its impact on their psychological contract violations. Using a 2x2 between-subject design, 101 student participants considered the mediating effect of a breach type (information misuse vs. hacking) and a moderating effect of a CEO's response medium (email apology vs. TV apology) impacted the participant's perceptions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four vignettes discussing a financial data breach.

Summary of Findings

The interviews identified that consumers consider their online information to be personal, with a strong preference to choose whether to share this information with others. However, there are concerns with trust which lead to potential fear with sharing their information online. Further, participants mentioned their top concerns related to a privacy violation occurred with their financial information being accessed online. It is important for retailers to properly communicate their information protection policies and respond quickly to their customers if a data breach occurs. Based on the interviews, an experiment showed that the type of violation (company misuse or data hack) impacted consumer's perceptions of psychological contract violations. Furthermore, that relationship was mediated by perceptions of a breach. However, the CEO apology medium did not moderate that relationship as expected, whereas information justice did.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to the literature on psychological contract violations for online consumer data organizations. First, it identifies key consumer concerns about privacy across multiple generations. Through interviews across four generations, common themes emerged to

define privacy. One of the biggest privacy concerns dealt with their financial information shared without consent. Second, the follow-up study found experimental evidence that the breach type of financial information matters. Consumers consider a hacking breach less onerous than company misuse of financial information. Furthermore, the perceptions of a data breach by an online retailer mediated the type of breach and psychological contract violations. However, the response from a CEO (email or TV announcement) did not impact the consumer's perception of the privacy contract violation. This research expands the theory of psychological contract violations from the field of management to marketing. Practitioners and policymakers can better understand the potential factors which may impact consumer's perceptions of a privacy breach and the perceived psychological contract violations. While any privacy breach of financial information is unacceptable, organizations need to be prepared for negative reactions. Companies should respond to the incident quickly and properly, as consumers valued forthcoming information about the incident more than the communication medium.

References are available upon request.

LEVERAGING MACHINE LEARNING TO INFORM MARKETING METHODOLOGIES FOR SOCIETAL WELLBEING: A CASE FOR ENHANCING FEDERAL NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), collaborative, wellbeing, value centered marketing

Description: The paper introduces an approach towards developing collaborative AI models for societal wellbeing by combining marketing methodologies for value co-creation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research directly relates to the conference's focus, addressing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 (providing good health and wellbeing). Automated decision making is defined as the capability of algorithms to provide decisions based on training and testing of input data where the governance of algorithms is either automated or associated with human intervention (Früh et al. 2019; Lomborg et al. 2023). On the other hand, a collaborative decision-making system delegates the decision of the automated decision-making system to a human by providing the model accuracy and recommendations to its user. Using a federal nutrition education program as a case, we present the preliminary results from an automated AI model to predict attrition in the program. We further identify its limitations and propose the development of a collaborative AI system. We adopt the value-centered marketing theory and adapt it to a nutrition education context. A collaborative decision-making system is an AI model

that provides recommendations to its final user in a transparent manner allowing them the final call. We utilize a value centered marketing approach to develop the collaborative AI model. This approach demonstrates the potential of marketing methodologies for value co-creation by offering rich insights into participant behavior and program effectiveness. The results can be used to provide insightful recommendations to program administrators by promoting shared decision making.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Current research focuses on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 of providing good health and wellbeing to societies with low income. Additionally, the literature addresses the need for technological advancements by providing collaborative artificial intelligence (AI) as a solution in public health research utilizing a marketing approach (Davis et al. 2021; Dwivedi et al. 2021). AI is growing in popularity and application in all wakes of research across sectors. Its potential to predict and prescribe is vital to automated decision-making, which is still in its infancy in the public sector (Desouza and Jacob 2017). One of the major areas of public advantage is enhancing federal outreach to the citizens, potentially increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public programs (Mergel et al. 2016; Pencheva et al. 2020). While algorithms generated by AI are objective, decision making is still a subjective arena where human expertise is needed.

In this study, we will develop a collaborative AI system to remedy for the data-biased decisions of the AI systems in the public sector since capturing human experiences is beyond the current capabilities of AI. We use the results from a predictive model developed using program data from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in a previous study

(cite). Complementing the results of AI with human decisions furthers the efficiency and practicality of the model developed (Cai et al. 2019). In this research, we propose utilizing feedback from the decision makers (i.e. EFNEP administrators) to develop a recommendation agent. In doing so, we follow a value-centered marketing framework (Agarwal et al. 2020) to develop primary research tools for the identification of the desired features of the collaborative AI model. Specifically, marketing researchers partner with program administrators, nutrition researchers and experts to design a collaborative AI assistant.

METHOD AND DATA

EFNEP is a federally funded nutrition education program overseen by the United States Department of Agriculture and implemented at land grant universities in all states and territories. It is the oldest nutrition education program designed to empower limited-resource populations in the United States to make informed decisions about nutrition and improve their overall wellbeing (NIFA 2023). In the federal fiscal year 2023, 50,649 adults and 204,222 youth participated in EFNEP (USDA 2024). The program provides participants with interactive, hands-on lessons focusing on five domains: diet quality, physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security. While curricula and delivery vary across states, EFNEP commonly consists of 6-12 lessons that are held weekly. The lessons are delivered by paraprofessional educators who typically live in the communities they serve. EFNEP paraprofessional educators are trained and supervised by EFNEP administrators and staff. Standardized data is collected from all adult participants at the beginning and end of the EFNEP lessons series. Collected data includes a questionnaire on participant's food and physical activity behaviors across program domains, a 24-hour dietary recall, and demographic information.

We employed multiple machine learning and AI methodologies to design an optimal predictive model which is a common practice in predicting attrition or dropout rates (Barramuño et al. 2022; Thammasiri et al. 2014). We compare a model's ability to predict true positives and false positives which indicate a model's ability to predict with a given data (Barramuño et al. 2022). The one that has a balanced ability to classify true and false positives is selected. This ensures the robustness of the model in predicting the attrition.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Gradient boost algorithms performed better than logistic regression and random forests models. They provide better accuracy, specificity and sensitivity to the AI model. Figure 1 shows the factors detected by the preliminary AI model that contribute to the attrition in the EFNEP program. The factors are arranged in the order of importance and the color of the factors indicate the clusters of factors based on their importance in predicting attrition.

Though a robust dynamic model was developed utilizing advanced ML techniques like random forests and boosting algorithms, it is to be noted that the data offer limited knowledge on the program and participant factors identified as dropout predictors. For example, the model provided evidence for behavioral patterns in attrition, such as males having higher dropout rates than females. Age is another significant factor, with higher dropout rates among females under 40 compared with men of the same age. The model, however, does not reveal the underlying reasons for such participant behaviors. To achieve a holistic approach to policy interventions and effectively target the EFNEP program's implementation, the AI model's strengths should be combined with insights gained from qualitative methodologies. (Finkelstein et al. 2024).

Our AI model indicated several reasons for attrition, including the participants' food and physical activity behaviors, social determinants of health, and geographic region. We also discovered new EFNEP enrollments have decreased yearly since 2016 (from nearly 76,000 in 2016 to roughly 21,000 in 2022). While some of these declines can be attributed to the pandemic, pre-pandemic declines suggest it might also be attributable to other factors such as program-level eligibility or recruitment criteria.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The validation and design of an attrition profile for nutrition education program participants will allow for developing targeted interventions and improve the effectiveness of the program. Amidst the rising prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases nationwide, this knowledge is key to the program administrators, educators, policy developers and researchers involved in the program at various levels. We also aim to identify and report best practices and develop a list of indicators for identifying vulnerable participants that are likely to drop out that can be utilized by nutrition education personnel. The results of the research will be disseminated to the researchers at several conferences (e.g., Public Policy and Marketing, Association for Consumer Research and American Marketing Association) through papers and presentations along with sharing the results with nutrition education professionals.

One of the members of our authorship team works closely with the EFNEP team at their university as well as with high level EFNEP officials nationally. We therefore also plan to present our results to EFNEP administrators and high-level policymakers at the National EFNEP Coordinators Conference. Through this presentation and discussion, we hope to identify interventions to increase enrollment and reduce attrition.

The results will fortify the contributions to both theory and practice of societal wellbeing catering to uplift disadvantaged and vulnerable groups simultaneously guiding policy interventions for nutrition education. The research can further be leveraged to larger scale studies funded through federal grants.

References available upon request

LIFELINES IN CRISIS: MILITARY BLOOD DONOR MOTIVATIONS FOR TREATING HEMORRHAGIC CASUALTIES

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Keywords: Military Blood Donation, Donor Motivations, Altruism, Military Healthcare, Behavioral Segmentation

Description: This research identifies unique motivational dimensions influencing blood donation behaviors among military-affiliated individuals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study investigates the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influencing blood donation among military-affiliated donors, addressing a critical gap in existing donation motivation research. Utilizing a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates Self-Determination Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Expectancy-Value Theory, and Social Identity Theory, we aimed to identify the motivational constructs distinctively shaping donor behaviors in military contexts. Specifically, we examined how altruism, social recognition, health values, and convenience factors influence military personnel's intentions and actual donation behavior and whether these motivations vary across key demographic segments such as gender, branch of service, and service duration. Understanding these motivational dynamics is essential for ensuring stable and reliable blood supplies during military operations and humanitarian crises.

Method and Data

A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 376 military-affiliated respondents associated with the Keesler Air Force Base Blood Donor Center. The survey incorporated demographic variables and motivational factors using validated, theory-driven constructs measured on five-point Likert scales. Data collection occurred between November 2024 and March 2025, with manual distribution and collection to maximize response rates. Analytical techniques included exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify motivational dimensions, ANOVA tests to explore demographic differences, and K-means clustering to segment respondents based on motivational profiles. Reliability checks (Cronbach's alpha) confirmed the consistency of the motivational scales, while regression analyses and correlations explored relationships between motivational factors and willingness to donate again.

Summary of Findings

The analysis identified three distinct motivational constructs: Intrinsic Altruism and Convenience, Extrinsic Social Recognition, and Health and Personal Values. Significant demographic variations emerged, notably higher intrinsic altruism among female donors and elevated extrinsic motivation among Navy personnel and veterans. Cluster analysis segmented respondents into three actionable donor profiles: Intrinsic Champions, Socially and Health-Driven Donors, and the Opportunity Segment. These segments provided clear guidance for tailored recruitment strategies. Correlation analysis indicated minimal relationships between motivational constructs and willingness to donate again, highlighting the potential role of other unmeasured factors influencing donor retention. These findings underscore the necessity of nuanced, segment-specific approaches to optimize donor recruitment and retention strategies.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research significantly advances the theoretical understanding and practical approaches to military blood donation by highlighting distinct motivational dimensions and demographic variations within a military context. It fills a critical research gap by empirically confirming that military-affiliated donors exhibit unique motivational profiles compared to civilian populations. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for policymakers, military healthcare administrators, and public health organizations to design targeted, evidence-based marketing strategies tailored to identified motivational segments. By segmenting donors into actionable groups, the research provides a clear framework for efficiently allocating resources and enhancing blood supply sustainability during critical operational periods. These findings directly support strategic decision-making and policy development to strengthen military readiness and humanitarian response capabilities.

References are available upon request.

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF CONSUMER WELL-BEING LITERATURE: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW OF THE CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE PROMISES

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Key words: Consumer well-being, Bibliometric analysis, thematic mapping, cluster analysis,

This research performs a bibliometric analysis to analyze, evaluate, and critically synthesize the current state of scholarship on CWB, while delineating the field's intellectual structure.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

> *RQ1 – What are the most influential articles, journals, authors, institutions, and countries related to the development of CWB research?*
>
> *RQ2 – What are the dominant themes and trends in CWB research?*
>
> *RQ3- What are the knowledge gaps and emerging agendas in light of the current state of CWB research?*

Methods and Data

Bibliometric analysis: Pritchard (1969) introduced bibliometrics as "the application of mathematical and statistical methods to articles and other means of communication" (p. 349). It enables a structured understanding of a research field by identifying patterns, connections, gaps,

and emerging themes (e.g., Dhontu et al., 2021). Scholars use bibliometric analysis to assess research production (publications), consumption (citations), and contributions (authors, institutions, regions). Following Lim, Kumar, and Ali's (2022) protocol, we conducted the analysis in three phases: assembling, arranging, and assessing.

Assembling: Our search strings to collect data for mining purposes were based on two most well-known scientific databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. For this purpose, we initially performed a scoping search using the keyword *consumer well-being* on Google Scholar. Afterward, we reviewed the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the first 100 records to develop a list of potentially relevant keywords on CWB. The list of identified keywords was validated with the 5 academic experts, and the following search string was developed: "consumer well-being" OR "consumer wellness". The keywords string was executed to search in the "title, abstract, and keywords" in specified databases on October 24, 2023 and yielded 999 studies (WoS - 371; Scopus - 628).

Arranging: After applying filters (Document Type: Articles/Reviews; Language: English), the dataset was reduced to 832 articles (WoS: 336; Scopus: 496). Following duplicate removal (*n* = 320) and independent title/abstract screening by the authors for relevance, 461 articles remained. Finally, using the ABDC journal ranking list, we refined the selection to 362 articles.

Assessing: Bibliometric evaluation introduces quantitative rigor into traditionally subjective manual/qualitative reviews (Mukherjee et al., 2021). For our analysis, we employed established bibliometric tools: the R *Bibliometrix* package, *Biblioshiny* (an R-based interface), and *VOSviewer* (a Java-based visualization tool). These tools are widely adopted in psychology and marketing research and enable robust bibliographic mapping and analysis.

Summary of Findings

Consumer well-being (CWB) defined as "a state in which consumers' experiences, with goods and services — experiences related to acquisition, preparation, consumption, ownership, maintenance, and disposal of specific categories of goods and services in the context of their local environment—are judged to be beneficial to both consumers and society at large." (Sirgy and Lee 2006; p. 43), has emerged as a significant area of inquiry across disciplines. Despite

growing interest, extant understanding is informed by fragmented literature, highlighting the need for a systematic synthesis. This study employs bibliometric analysis to evaluate the current state of scholarship on CWB and map its intellectual structure. We identify influential articles, prolific authors, leading journals, institutions, and countries, as well as collaboration networks—providing insights into the field's evolving trajectory. A keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals five distinct thematic clusters: consumer welfare and ethical marketing, gender and human aspect, consumption psychology, health and sustainable practices, and contextual and financial literacy. Furthermore, we trace the temporal evolution of CWB research, highlights central debates and contradictions, and present overarching observations with theoretical and practical implications. Our analysis culminates in an overarching model that advances both marketing theory and consumer psychology, contributing meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on CWB.

Key Contributions

First, we delineate the conceptual structure and development trajectory of CWB research by identifying the influential studies, leading scholars, prominent journals, and emerging thematic trends. In doing so, we provide a "state-of-the-art snapshot" of the domain and generate important research questions that can stimulate both theoretical advancements in marketing and yield practical insights for real-world applications. Placed in a broader perspective, we respond to calls by marketing scholars (Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland, 2018) for the development of more review papers — "critical evaluations of materials that have already been published," (Bern, 1995, p. 172) — with the potential to inspire new conceptual frameworks and take the field forward. Second, by identifying five thematic clusters, we offer a more nuanced and integrative understanding of CWB as a construct. By transcending boundaries of proximate disciplines, this research not only contributes at the intersection of marketing and consumer psychology, but also serves as a valuable reference point for educators, researchers, and students across disciplines. Our findings highlight areas where research is abundant and well-established and also reveal those with fertile research possibilities. Finally, our findings offer actionable insights for academic researchers seeking to focus their efforts in impactful areas, including guidance on targeting high-impact journals. Notably, our work aligns with the expectations of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), which emphasizes the

importance of societal impact in faculty research, teaching, and service. For well-being marketers, the study emphasizes the importance of advancing the well-being of both customers and employees. This includes addressing customers' holistic life needs while fostering employee health, engagement, and productivity.

References are available upon request.

MORE THAN A MODALITY: CONCEPTUALIZING NEW WAYS CONSUMERS ARE USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT SOCIAL CAUSES THROUGH VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

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Keywords: virtual volunteering, charitable giving, prosocial consumer behavior, giving time, technology.

Description: We conceptualize virtual volunteering as a new form of charitable giving, defined by distinctive dimensions, attributes and consumer benefits.

<div align="center">**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**</div>

Research Question

Technology is disrupting the volunteering landscape, resulting in a pivot from traditional, in-person to virtual forms of volunteering. Virtual volunteering (VV) is emerging as a prevalent consumer phenomenon, marking a significant turning point in how volunteerism is approached worldwide (Pholpituke 2023). Examples of VV include using video applications to assist the visually impaired (Eyes), transcribing cultural heritage artifacts online (Institution), or redesigning features on websites to help nonprofits (Taproot). VV is recognized as the "future" of volunteering (Gharib 2021) and is experiencing unprecedented growth (VolunteerMatch 2021)—reinforcing its significance in today's digital age.

Previous consumer research assumes, either implicitly or explicitly, that volunteering occurs in-person (e.g., planting trees, serving meals) (Botner et al. 2015; Liu and Aaker 2008; Macdonnell and White 2015; Reed et al. 2007; Reed II et al. 2016; White and Peloza 2009). Although recent marketing research considers online aspects of charitable giving (e.g., donating money; (Costello and Malkoc 2022)), this has not extended to volunteering. This represents a critical oversight, as marketing research acknowledges that different modalities can significantly and distinctively shape consumer psychology and behavior (Melumad and Meyer 2020), suggesting VV may differ from in-person volunteering in important ways. To the best of our knowledge, there is no marketing literature investigating this new form of volunteering. Thus, critical questions remain about the nature of this new phenomenon: What is VV? What key features conceptually define it? How does VV differ from in-person volunteering?

Method

We recruited 31 participants from two different samples of 20 diverse consumers who participate in some form of VV and 11 leaders from a diverse set of charitable organizations that offer a form of VV service in the U.S.

We conducted two semi-structured in-depth interviews. Discussions began with questions to build rapport (McCracken 1988), followed by a series of logical, broad and specific questions that involved probing (Arsel 2017; Kozinets et al. 2012) to elicit greater meaning of VV. Interviews were recorded on a university licensed Zoom account over a period of five months (May – September 2023) and lasted 57 minutes (consumers) and one hour and 16 minutes (leaders), on average.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and were reviewed several times to identify common terminology. The data was analyzed using open and a priori code categories (Fischer and Guzel 2023; Miles and Huberman 2018; Strauss and Corbin 1998) in Atlas.ti. Techniques identified links and patterns to generate categories judged to represent internally coherent yet mutually exclusive concepts (Grodal et al. 2021). A thematic data analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006; Clarke et al. 2015) was reflexively applied to identify data-driven themes that represent theoretically distinct concepts.

Summary of Findings

Results show that two fundamental dimensions conceptually distinguish VV from in-person forms of volunteering: absence of physical interactions and reliance on information communications technology (ICT; e.g., technologies involving connected devices). Although in-

person interaction is not required, ICT is integral in performing (or transmitting) tasks. These two fundamental dimensions alter the basic characteristics of the VV activities performed.

Task attributes, therefore, represent the second defining feature. Applying the Work Design Framework (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006) as an organizing lens, results reveal four clusters of task attributes on which VV differs: task nature (e.g., greater scheduling autonomy), knowledge (e.g., more specialization), context (e.g., proximity less relevant), and social (e.g., less relationship-building). These distinct task attributes of VV activities subsequently shape the perceived benefits afforded by VV.

Lastly, results reveal three clusters of perceived benefits that consumers uniquely experience when engaging in VV, which closely align with Self Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci 2000): autonomy (e.g., more flexibility), competence (e.g., greater skill acquisition), and relatedness (e.g., weaker social connection).

In this way, VV is more than modality, because it is not distinguished from in-person volunteering only in terms of physicality and ICT, but also in terms of what a consumer does (task attributes) and what they get from experiencing it (perceived benefits), such as greater autonomy and competence (vs. relatedness) benefits.

Statement of Key Contributions

We advance marketing research on charitable giving by conceptualizing virtual volunteering (VV) as a growing consumer phenomenon that differs from in-person volunteering in important ways. Our data-driven framework illustrates that VV is more than a modality and is distinguished from in-person volunteering, not only in terms of two fundamental defining dimensions (i.e., lack of physicality, presence of ICT) but also in terms of what consumers do when they volunteer (task attributes) and what they get from experiencing it (perceived benefits).

We apply these data driven insights to generate a holistic framework that illustrates VV's primary features.

This work contributes to research examining how technology can improve (vs. harm) consumer well-being (Etkin 2016), and acknowledges that VV increases inclusivity by enhancing accessibility for overlooked consumer segments where it may not be feasible to volunteer in-person (e.g., immunocompromised, immobile, neurodiverse, etc.).

Our framework also provides valuable insights for both for profit and non-profit organizations seeking to improve their recruitment and retention to effectively segmenting, targeting, and positioning volunteering services to consumers. Understanding how differing volunteering modalities influences consumers' perceived benefits experienced for themselves, their communities, and society can help organizations contribute toward generating social impact.

References are available upon request.

NAVIGATING THE WICKED PROBLEM OF PFAS: POLICY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN FOOD SYSTEMS

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Keywords: PFAS, consumer trust, risk communication, food policy, environmental contamination

Description:
This paper investigates how various theory-driven communication strategies impact consumer confidence in regional food systems following PFAS contamination, revealing that messaging about novel actions taken by state and farm actors to mitigate damage can restore and even enhance appeal of food in regions openly addressing contamination.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question
What information conditions are most likely to mitigate damage to the reputation of Maine food stemming from communication about PFAS contamination? What characteristics of consumers may impact message effectiveness?

Method and Data
We conducted a survey experiment with 607 consumers in the Northeastern U.S. using a randomized, repeated measures design with between-subject manipulation of message exposure. Participants were assigned to one of eight messaging conditions that varied in content and framing, drawing on literature from marketing, psychology, and risk communication. Pre- and post-treatment appeal of Maine food was measured using a six-item scale index. Additional covariates included PFAS awareness and concern about environmental contaminants. The final analysis included 592 observations. Treatment effects and interaction effects were estimated using OLS regression.

Summary of Findings
Baseline messaging about PFAS contamination led to an average drop in consumer confidence in Maine food. However, messages that emphasized Maine's proactive regulatory response and farmers' voluntary actions significantly improved perceptions. In contrast, two-sided messages (those presenting both risks and reassurances) were not effective, and in some cases attenuated otherwise positive messaging. Awareness of PFAS did not moderate treatment effects, but

concern about environmental contaminants did: the more concerned participants were, the greater the positive impact of the strongest messages. These findings suggest that consumers reward transparent, action-oriented messaging in contexts of emerging food safety threats.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to literature on food policy, risk communication, and public trust by empirically testing communication strategies in response to a novel environmental contaminant. It challenges the assumption that two-sided messaging is always effective and highlights how proactive transparency can serve as a reputational asset. Practically, the findings offer actionable guidance to policymakers and food producers: by clearly communicating corrective actions, stakeholders can mitigate reputation damage while building consumer trust. These insights are timely given increasing attention to PFAS and other persistent contaminants in the food system.

NEONATAL REFERRAL SERVICES BY COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS (CHWs) AND NEONATAL MORTALITY IN EMERGING NATIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE POLICIES

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Keywords: Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), Frontline Employees, Community Health Workers, Neonatal Mortality, Referral Services, Emerging Economies.

Description: This paper examines the performance of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in providing neonatal referral services and explores strategies to enhance their performance in addressing high neonatal mortality rates in emerging nations.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

This paper to addresses the following research questions (RQs):

- **RQ1:** How do community health workers (CHWs) carry out neonatal referral services, and what factors influence their performance?

- **RQ2:** In what ways can the volume and relevance of CHW referrals be measured to understand their impact on neonatal health outcomes better?

- **RQ3:** How do supportive healthcare practices, such as antenatal care and home-based newborn care, influence the outcomes of CHW referral activities?

- **RQ4:** What role do CHW training and skill development play in enhancing their performance in making appropriate neonatal referrals?

Method and Data

To address the research questions and provide actionable insights for policymakers, this paper conducted three interrelated studies within India's public healthcare system, focusing on neonatal referral services led by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), India's cadre of CHWs. Study 1 employed an exploratory field approach to map the CHW-led referral process and identify key contingency conditions. Building on these insights, Study 2a operationalizes CHW referral performance along two dimensions: *referral completeness (RC)*, capturing referral volume, and *referral appropriateness (RA)*, reflecting contextual relevance. Drawing on service-dominant logic and frontline employee performance literature, Study 2a theorizes and empirically examines the relationships between RC, RA, and neonatal mortality rate (NeoMR) using a Gaussian copula regression framework on a three-year (2017–2019), district-level panel dataset from India's Healthcare Management Information System (HMIS), covering 530 districts. A natural experiment

involving the rollout of a digital incentive system provides post hoc causal support. Study 2b extends the analysis to generate actionable policy insights by investigating (1) the moderating effects of antenatal care (ANC) continuity through *reciprocal interactions* and home-based neonatal care (HBNC) coverage through *adaptive service refinement* on the RC–NeoMR relationship and (2) whether CHW participation in structured training improves their RA. It incorporates additional state-level panel data on CHW training-related variables.

Summary of Findings

This paper offers several key findings. Study 1 identifies that the CHW-led neonatal referral process unfolds across three stages: initiation, preadmission, and admission. It conceptualizes CHW referral performance using two dimensions: RC, indicating volume, and RA, indicating contextual relevance. It also highlights ANC and home-based neonatal care HBNC as potential contextual enablers. Study 2a reveals a counterintuitive relationship: RC is positively associated with NeoMR, while RA is negatively associated. Theoretically, this finding is explained by CHWs' limited clinical acumen and diagnostic capability, referred to as masterful operant resource insufficiency, linked to low education and insufficient training. A post hoc causal analysis supports a causal relationship between RC and NeoMR. Study 2b extends these findings by showing that reciprocal interactions and adaptive service refinement moderate the RC–NeoMR relationship and weaken its adverse effect. Additionally, higher CHW participation in structured, offline, multi-module training improves their RA. A temporal effect also emerges: early-phase training participation is negatively associated with RA, while later-phase participation shows a positive association. These findings offer actionable guidance for improving CHW training and referral strategies to reduce preventable neonatal deaths in emerging health systems.

Statement of Key Contributions

This paper offers multiple contributions. First, it extends the FLE literature by demonstrating that the relationship between FLE service productivity and service outcomes is contingent on provider knowledge and skills, particularly in decentralized, resource-constrained service systems. Second, it refines the operant resource-based view within SDL by applying the basic and masterful operant resource hierarchy to explain how operant resource insufficiency undermines value co-creation, challenging the reliance on productivity-based metrics in such settings. Third, it highlights the compensatory role of reciprocal interactions, showing how informed beneficiary engagement can enhance service alignment and performance, contributing to broader marketing theory on customer engagement and co-production. Fourth, it introduces the construct of adaptive service refinement, contributing to the marketing literature on service learning and dynamic capabilities by showing how repeated engagement supports iterative capability development in under-resourced contexts. Fifth, it proposes a two-dimensional framework for evaluating CHW referral performance, capturing both completeness and appropriateness, thereby informing service evaluation and policy design in emerging markets. Sixth, by leveraging panel data, this paper offers a temporal perspective that enables robust causal inference, addressing limitations in prior research that has mostly relied on systematic reviews, cross-sectional data, or self-reported surveys.

References

References are available upon request.

NUDGING CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH DONATION STRUCTURES

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question
This research investigates how donation structures—specifically, the format and timing of allocation decisions—influence charitable behavior. We address three core questions: (1) Does the donation structure affect total giving? (2) How does structure impact donors' perceived cause effectiveness? (3) Can structure enhance warm glow, or personal satisfaction from giving?

Method and Data
In Study 1 (N = 715), participants were assigned to donate a hypothetical $100 using one of three allocation formats: single allocation, equal split, or free allocation. Study 2 (N = 1425) employed real monetary incentives and examined the effects of introducing an additional system-change charity either as a reallocation or as an extra donation prompt. Key outcomes included donation amount, perceived impact, and warm glow. Both studies used covariates such as cause importance and measured moderators like locus of control and just world beliefs.

Summary of Findings
Study 1 showed no effect on donation amount but found that single allocation increased perceived impact and warm glow compared to free allocation. Study 2 found that an additional donation prompt significantly increased total donations without lowering satisfaction or perceived impact. Reallocation, however, slightly reduced perceived impact. These findings suggest donors prefer supplementary giving over redistribution, and concentrated giving may enhance perceived efficacy and satisfaction.

Key Contributions
This research highlights how subtle changes in donation structure can affect donor experience without altering total giving. It offers actionable insights for charitable platforms: single-allocation formats may strengthen donor commitment and warm glow, while supplementary prompts may increase total giving. The results bridge psychological motivations and platform design, offering strategies to enhance both immediate and systemic charitable outcomes.

OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE, SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE, RESPONSE SATISFICING, AND DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTS ACROSS SAMPLE SOURCES: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY RESEARCHERS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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Description: Findings from two studies demonstrate that sample source differences and respondent satisficing represent significant threats to the integrity and validity of policy and well-being research involving the measurement and use of objective knowledge as an outcome or moderator.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Objective and subjective knowledge measures are of key interest in policy-based research (Netemeyer et al. 2024). To assess objective knowledge, consumers are asked a series of questions to determine their absolute and/or relative levels of knowledge about specific domains (e.g., nutrition knowledge, financial literacy, environmental behaviors (Ellen 1994; Li et al. 2021). We propose that response satisficing, the survey participant's decision to provide responses to minimally satisfy the specific survey task at hand, rather than more effortful responses (Berry et al. 2022; 2024), differs across sample sources. We propose this has important effects on objective knowledge measures, results, and downstream outcomes important to policy research. In two studies, we examine the following:

(1) How do different sample sources with more/less stringent respondent vetting affect scores on policy-relevant objective knowledge measures, attention checks, and

response satisficing? How does including satisficing as a covariate affect knowledge

scores?

(2) How do sample sources affect objective versus subjective nutrition knowledge?

(3) What is the effect of a nutrition disclosure across different sample sources and both

(a) objective and (b) subjective nutrition knowledge moderators? Does response

satisficing (as a covariate) affect the impact of the different knowledge moderators

across the sample sources?

Method and Data

Three different crowdsourced sample sources with 100 participants in each sample were

recruited in Study 1 (a "standard" MTurk sample (i.e., anyone using a U.S. IP address was

eligible); a "stringently vetted" MTurk sample (recruited through CloudResearch), and a

"moderately vetted" MTurk sample where participants were screened by MTurk approval rating

of 90%. Each sample survey included multi-item measures for twelve different objective

knowledge domains used in prior public policy research (e.g., nutrition knowledge, general

financial literacy). We also measure and use response satisficing (α=.88; see Berry et al. 2022;

2024) and demographics as covariates.

In Study 2, we again used weakly vetted MTurk and "stringently vetted" MTurk

CloudResearch samples but also included a professionally managed (non-crowdsourced) panel

from a full-service research company. We used a single factor nutrition profile experiment with

favorable or unfavorable nutrition levels in a Facts panel on a package randomly assigned to

participants. All survey measures were identical across sample sources. Sample sizes for each

source were approximately 200. We used a nine-item objective nutrition knowledge scale

(Andrews et al. 1998; 2021) and a three-item subjective knowledge measure (Burton 1999;

α=.83). A disease risk evaluation (α=.91) was the primary experimental outcome measure (Burton et al. 2015).

Summary of Findings

In Study 1 the effect of sample source on an objective knowledge index for the combined twelve knowledge domains is statistically significant ($p<.001$; eta-square=.106) and domain specific measures. All follow-up contrasts between the sample sources for the knowledge index are significant. Adding the response satisficing measure (Berry et al. 2024) to the analysis as an additional covariate (beyond demographics) reduces the difference in objective knowledge to *nonsignificance,*

Study 2 results show there are strong differences in response satisficing (F=218.3; $p<.001$; eta-square=.43) and objective knowledge (F=57.2; $p<.001$; eta-square=.17) associated with sample source. PROCESS Model 3 examines the effect of the nutrition manipulation on disease risk across sample sources and nutrition knowledge. *Objective* nutrition knowledge has the anticipated moderating effects for both the fully vetted MTurk and professionally managed samples. For the favorable nutrition profile, in these two samples*,* perceptions of disease risk decrease for those with high and moderate knowledge, but not for low knowledge. In contrast, using *subjective knowledge* as a moderator show consistent significant effects of the nutrition manipulation regardless of the level of subjective knowledge for both samples (i.e., no moderating effects). Results are even more problematic for the standard MTurk sample.

Key Contributions

There are a number of implications of this research for policy researchers interested in objective and subjective knowledge and their effects, as well as journal editors and policy decision makers concerned about data quality. While controlling for demographic differences, Study 1 shows the source of the sample is associated with substantial differences in summated

and domain specific objective knowledge across domains of interest to policy researchers, but inclusion of response satisficing as a covariate reduces the difference in objective knowledge to nonsignificance. Study 2 results show that the effects of a nutrition manipulation can vary substantially across three sample sources, ranging from full nonsignificance to the anticipated reductions in risk perceptions for a more healthful nutrition profile. Such differences across sample sources threaten conclusions researchers would draw about effects of the experimental manipulation. Yet, for well vetted sample sources, comparisons show that objective knowledge is more sensitive than subjective knowledge when assessing the moderating role of knowledge. Results demonstrate the many issues related to response satisficing and data quality issues for researchers using online data to examine policy-relevant issues and how satisficing measures may be used to enhance response validity (Berry and Burton 2024).

References are available upon request.

POLICY TYPE MATTERS: DIVERSITY IN CONSUMER REACTIONS TO GOVERNMENT-BACKED HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES

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Keywords:

Public policy, Policy Design and Intervention, Healthcare Marketing

Description:

This research examines how different government policies promoting the same healthcare initiative elicit varied emotional responses that significantly influence consumer adoption.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Public policy makers frequently develop policies to encourage the adoption of initiatives with significant social welfare implications, such as vaccines. However, different policies geared to the same goal often yield markedly different outcomes. Using the HPV vaccine market as a context, we investigates how varying policy types affect consumer emotional responses and subsequent behavior. Specifically, we explore three different state-level policies in the U.S.— school mandates, pharmacist authorization, and educational programs—and use two studies to examine how they shape consumer emotions (e.g., anger, dejection) and impact vaccine adoption. The specific questions we address are: (1) How do policy types differentially affect consumer emotion? (2) How do those emotional responses influence adoption behavior? And (3) what are the policy implications of understanding these emotional mechanisms? Drawing upon control theory, we argue that each policy alters perceived consumer control, which in turn influences their emotional responses and behavioral outcomes. "Hard" mandates, which reduce perceived autonomy, are expected to evoke anger and hinder adoption while "soft" access-enhancing policies (pharmacist authorization) and educational programs may improve perceived control, reduce negative emotions, and facilitate adoption.

Method and Data

We adopt a multi-method approach combining large-scale secondary data and experimental evidence. First, we use dynamic difference-in-differences and instrumental variable techniques on state-level panel data from 2013 to 2019 that includes (1) state-level policy data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, (2) emotion data from Twitter posts processed via LIWC sentiment dictionaries, and (3) vaccine uptake rates from the National Immunization Survey (for teens) and National Health Interview Survey (for adults). We use Dynamic Difference-in-Differences technique to analyze the effect of staggered policy adoption on state-level consumer emotions and use an instrumental variable approach to establish causal inference between emotions and behavior. Second, to test the mediating role of emotions on behavior, we conduct a pre-registered online experiment (N = 387, U.S. adults) where participants are randomly exposed to policy interventions and asked to report both their emotional responses and their likelihood of adopting a fictional vaccine. This approach allows us to separately and jointly test the emotional and behavioral effects of different policy types.

Summary of Findings

Our Dynamic Difference-in-Differences result shows that different policy types trigger distinct consumer emotions. Specifically, school mandates increase anger in public discourse on Twitter while pharmacist authorization policies reduce anger and educational programs lower feelings of dejection. These emotional changes mediate downstream behavior: policies that enhance perceived control leads to more positive emotions and greater adoption. Our instrumental variable results confirm the causal effect of emotion on adoption (e.g., a decrease in anger leads higher vaccine uptake). Our experimental study further validates this mediational pathway. Participants exposed to mandate policies expressed significantly more anger, agitation, and anxiety, which decreased their stated willingness to adopt the vaccine. Conversely, pharmacist authorization increased willingness via reduced sadness. Educational programs had no significant direct or mediated effects in the experiment, possibly due to lack of real consequences. Across both archival and experimental methods, we show that 'softer' policies that preserve or enhance perceived control evoke more favorable emotions and lead to higher adoption rates, while 'harder' policies provoke emotional backlash and dampen adoption.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research advances marketing and public policy literature in two ways. First, we identify consumer emotion as a critical but previously overlooked mechanism through which policy influences consumer adoption and decision-making. Our findings demonstrate that different policy designs evoke distinct emotional responses from consumers. This insight addresses recent calls to examine consumer protection in vaccine information and advances our understanding of how emotional responses can inform more effective public policy design. Second, we provide an analysis of different policy approaches across states that aim to achieve the same outcome, evaluating their effectiveness in driving consumer adoption. By combining

problem identification with systematic evaluation, we contribute to the growing discourse on policy design, implementation, and evaluation and offer valuable insights for future policy decisions.

POLICY- AND DECISION-CHANGING AMID NATURAL DISASTERS

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Keywords: Crisis management, Stakeholder engagement, Wildfires, National parks, Turkey

Description: With respect to crisis management, consumer behaviour theory, and stakeholder theory, the research case study proposes the literature-informed decision-changing criteria that can help make objective decisions and policies that target subjective stakeholders during crises such as natural disasters.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Which significant criteria can justify a change in decisions and policies that target subjective stakeholders amid natural disasters such as wildfires? A national park during a wildfire crisis set a generalisable example for Türkiye (Turkey). Seeing the national park reopened during the wildfire crisis worried stakeholders such as local communities and non-governmental organisations. There are three major corresponding needs in literature: a need to develop a potential crisis theory, a need to propose managerial criteria during the sustainability crisis (e.g. with respect to the SDG 13: Climate action), and a need to make sure of the components of a natural tri-component model of attitude to use it in managerial decision-making during crises with respect to brain studies. Therefore, the purpose of the research case study is to propose criteria that can help make objective decisions and policies that target subjective stakeholders during crises such as natural disasters, therefore, that can help objectively solve managerial dilemmas without being insensitive.

Method and Data

The author contacted the examined organisation, selected an urgent topic, collected primary qualitative data from executives and stakeholders, made theory-based generalisations and propositions in the narrative literature review, developed criteria that depend on the generalisations and propositions, analysed the data with respect to deduction, the proposed criteria, and a self-evaluation scale. The self-evaluation scale examines if justification of a decision satisfies the criteria and if it is reasonable to change a decision, a decision alternative or a perspective. The format of the scale is 1: Strong incongruity with the criterion, 2: Moderate incongruity with the criterion, 3: A mixed situation, 4: Moderate congruity with the criterion, 5: Strong congruity with the criterion.

The examined organisation is the Dilek Peninsula - Great Menderes Delta National Park in a tourism city by the name Aydın in western Türkiye. The national park is a public organisation within The Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The urgent topic is the wildfire crisis in the summer of 2021. The executives include the national park manager and the governor of the city. The stakeholders include local communities and non-governmental organisations.

Summary of Findings

Generalisations and propositions in the narrative literature review help form the literature-informed decision-changing criteria and a self-evaluation scale. The contents of the criteria and the scale are: Is stakeholder voice absent in policy- or decision-making? Is policy- or decision-making dependent on very few variables? Is policy- or decision-making assumed to be totally

separated from emotions? Does policy- or decision-making fit scientific implications without being insensitive? Does the addressee accept an objective policy or decision? Can policy- or decision-making apply to future conditions?

Case data reveal that the national park was subject to several decisions, initiatives, reactions, and justifications about to close the national park or not. Analysis of the case data with respect to the proposed criteria reveals that each subsequent decision involves a broader set of stakeholders. Each subsequent decision depends on a broader set of variables, factors, or constructs. Considering the role of emotions in decision-making and among stakeholders is important. Considering social implications can improve sensitivity. The level of noise among stakeholders reveals if stakeholders support or oppose a decision. Finally, justifying a decision broadly enough to have potential for the future is the key.

Key Contributions

The contribution is the criteria by the name literature-informed decision-changing criteria. The proposed criteria and the self-evaluation scale begin with the role of stakeholders during disasters, continue with the multiplicity of variables, focus on a natural tri-component model of attitude (e.g. affection-cognition-conation), and conclude with potential next steps. The criteria have implications for potential environmental and non-environmental crises, crises elsewhere or less harmful actual crises. Such criteria can help develop a potential crisis theory. Executives can use the criteria as a guide to policy- and decision-making and improve stakeholder engagement. Educators can use the case study as a teaching exercise.

Author note: As of now, the author has an independent status.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY INFLUENCES IMPOSED EFFORT TO ATTAIN GOVERNMENT AID, YET MESSAGING CAN INTERVENE

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Keywords: Political ideology, Sludge, Government Aid, Vulnerable Consumers

Description: Using secondary data and lab studies, this research looks at how and why political ideology may lead to sludge in aid programs and offers an intervention to help.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research has shown that political ideology influences various helping behaviors (e.g. donations), but less research examines how political ideology might be un(helpful) regarding decisions about the setup of government aid programs. Thus, we ask: How and why political ideology may impact views on how to administer government aid? And how can messaging play a role in creating more helpful behaviors? To examine these questions, we lean into the research on nudges and sludge.

Past studies have demonstrated that various programs, government or private, which have optimized the decision environment to reduce decision effort, can nudge people toward beneficial outcomes for themselves (Sunstein and Gosset 2020; Thaler 2018)*. For example, programs that automatically enroll employees in health or savings plans. Conversely, programs

that are intentionally designed to degrade the decision environment to increase decision effort, creating what is called sludge, push people away from beneficial outcomes (Sunstein and Gosset 2020; Thaler 2018). For example, attaining deserved tax credits may be needlessly complex (Thaler 2018). Such sludge wastes time, elicits negative affect, and cause people to give up. Extending on past research, we examine how political ideology may create sludge in aid programs, why it is imposed, and an intervention to help.

Method And Data

We study the imposition of sludge in the U.S. government's main food aid program, SNAP. We test the proposition that, despite this work requirement, states and individuals whose political ideology is conservative will impose more sludge, e.g., more onerous paperwork, on aid seekers. In addition, we explore the motivations that may impel conservatives to impose sludge and test an intervention to deter sludge. To do this, we conducted four studies.

First in Study 1, using data from SNAP, a federally-funded food aid program managed by U.S. states, we find that conservative-leaning states vs. liberal-leaning imposed more sludge. Then, we conducted three lab experiments. In Study 2, we asked people who were conservative and liberal about the effort they would require for food aid attainment, considering two different aid amounts as a replicate. In Study 3, we conducted an experiment to examine whether conservatives' opposition to equality in the social system, and resultant opposition to tax-funded aid for economically lower social groups, explained their imposition of extra effort (sludge) on aid seekers. In Study 4, we experimentally tested an intervention to dissuade conservatives from imposing extra effort (sludge) by stating the aid seekers were in their ingroup.

Long

Summary of Findings

Globally, many consumers find themselves economically vulnerable and unable to participate in the traditional for-profit marketplace; they must seek alternative consumption routes, such as food aid. We examine a federal food aid program, through the lenses of marketing, public policy and consumerism. We study the required effort, representing the price people must pay, to participate in the aid program, and when that efforts starts to create unnecessary sludge.

We find that conservative individuals impose more sludge regardless of the aid benefit amount. We discover that conservative individuals impose more sludge due to their opposition to equality in the social system and corresponding opposition to tax-funded aid to help economically lower social groups. We also test a message intervention to discourage the imposition of sludge and find that conveying the aid will benefit one's ingroup discourages conservatives from imposing more sludge on aid seekers. This research helps policymakers understand the sludge that exists in government aid programs and a counteracting intervention. We recommend that policy officials act more proactively on the results of their reports to try to combat sludge imposed on aid seekers.

Key Contributions

This research examines how political ideology affects the service quality of aid delivery. We expand upon past literature which has studied the effects of political ideology on other un(helpful) behaviors by examining how a conservative versus liberal political ideology relates to the imposition of excess effort or sludge on aid seekers. We also study why sludge is imposed and an intervention to improve the situation. We add to the work on sludge by looking at it

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beyond the rebate context where it has been studied, to the life-saving context of government aid delivery.

Our findings provide insights to policy officials that regulate and manage aid programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. We show that political ideology helps to explain differing levels of excess effort or sludge imposed on aid seekers. We recommend that policy officials act more proactively on the results of sludge audits to try to deter it. Policy officials can reward low sludge levels and/or penalizing high ones, e.g., through their reimbursement policies. We also recommend the use of messaging that conveys to policymakers and residents that people like them seek aid because our findings show that this messaging discourages the imposition of sludge.

*References are available upon request.

Pronoun Power: How "We" and "You" Shape Consumer Responses to Public Service Announcements

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Keywords: Pronoun, Inclusiveness, Competence, Public Service Announcement.

Description: This paper examines how the use of "we" versus "you" pronouns in public service announcements (PSAs) influences consumer attitudes, behavioral intentions, and perceived inclusiveness, revealing that "we" pronouns are more effective, particularly when organizational competence is perceived as low.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research explores how pronouns used in Public Service Announcements (PSAs) influence consumer responses. Despite the increasing use of prosocial messaging, little attention has been given to linguistic framing—especially pronoun choice. The study investigates three key questions: (1) Do "we" vs. "you" pronouns affect PSA effectiveness? (2) What psychological mechanism drives this effect? (3) Are these effects conditional on contextual factors? Drawing on social psychology and linguistic theory, the study proposes that using "we" pronouns enhances perceived organizational inclusiveness, leading to more favorable attitudes, increased engagement, and stronger behavioral intentions. Additionally, the heuristic-systematic model suggests that organizational competence moderates this effect—pronouns matter more when the organization is seen as less competent. By examining how subtle linguistic cues shape perceptions and behaviors, this research contributes to the design of more effective and inclusive PSAs, especially in contexts such as mental health and homelessness. Ultimately, it aims to provide insight into how small language shifts can influence public attitudes and societal impact, equipping policymakers and nonprofits with practical tools to enhance message resonance and drive prosocial outcomes.

Method and Data

A multimethod approach was employed, including one secondary data study and three experiments. Study 1 analyzed 796 PSA tweets from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services using optical character recognition (OCR) and text analysis. Of these, 232 posts featured a single pronoun; "you" was the most common. Study 2 experimentally manipulated pronouns in a mental health PSA and found that "we" pronouns increased favorable attitudes. Study 3 used another PSA on mental illness to test whether perceived inclusiveness mediated the effect of pronouns on attitudes, donation intentions, and willingness to find more information.

"We" pronouns led to higher scores across all outcomes, with perceived inclusiveness fully mediating the effects. Study 4 examined homelessness PSAs and tested whether the impact of pronouns depended on perceived organizational competence. Using Hayes's PROCESS models, results revealed that "we" pronouns were more effective only when perceived competence was low. Across all studies, participants were randomly assigned, and validated measures were used to assess attitudes, intentions, engagement, and perceived inclusiveness. This comprehensive design ensured both internal and ecological validity, offering robust evidence of the psychological and contextual mechanisms linking pronoun use to PSA effectiveness

Summary of Findings

This research finds that pronoun choice significantly shapes responses to PSAs. Across four studies, "we" pronouns consistently outperformed "you" pronouns in fostering positive attitudes, donation intentions, and willingness to find more information. Study 1 revealed that most government PSAs favor "you," but subsequent experiments suggest that "we" may be more effective. Study 2 demonstrated that participants exposed to "we" pronouns reported more favorable attitudes. Study 3 identified perceived organizational inclusiveness as a key mediator: "we" pronouns enhance perceived inclusiveness, which in turn improves attitudes, intentions, and engagement. Study 4 showed that organizational competence moderates this effect. When competence was perceived as low, "we" pronouns significantly boosted inclusiveness and downstream outcomes. However, at high competence, the effect disappeared, indicating that recipients rely more on competence cues than on linguistic framing. These results collectively suggest that "we" pronouns humanize the organization, promote shared responsibility, and build emotional connection—especially when the organization lacks credibility. Conversely, "you" pronouns may create psychological distance or perceived blame. Thus, the power of pronouns lies in their ability to subtly reframe social roles and relational dynamics, enabling more resonant and effective public communications.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research makes four key contributions. First, it advances the public service communication literature by spotlighting the underexamined role of pronouns in PSA design. While past work emphasized message content and visual appeals, this study shows that linguistic cues alone can significantly impact consumer attitudes and behaviors. Second, it contributes to language and persuasion theory by identifying perceived inclusiveness as a psychological mechanism linking pronoun usage to behavioral outcomes. Third, it introduces a boundary condition—organizational competence—via the heuristic-systematic model. Pronouns matter most when competence is low, as recipients are more likely to scrutinize message tone and relational cues. Finally, this work provides actionable implications for nonprofit marketers, public health agencies, and policy designers. It shows that "we" pronouns are particularly effective in low-trust contexts or with stigmatized issues (e.g., homelessness, mental illness), where inclusion and solidarity are critical. The findings challenge the dominance of directive "you"-based messages in public campaigns and offer a cost-effective, scalable alternative to boost engagement. Overall, the research reframes pronoun usage as a strategic tool rather than a stylistic choice, enabling more inclusive, emotionally resonant, and effective PSAs that bridge the gap between institutions and the public.

References are available upon request.

REVISITING A DARK SIDE OF THE MARKETING SYSTEM: WHEN CONSUMERS BELIEVE IT IS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

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Keywords: Symbolic violence, marketplace violence, social inequity, marketing practices, beliefs.

Description: This article conceptualizes a belief called *marketing-as-an-instrument-of-symbolic-violence* and develops and validates a seven-items single-dimension scale to measure its strength.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Purpose

The impact of marketing on social inequity and inequality is a topic that has garnered the attention of the marketing discipline in its pursuit of developing more effective marketing strategies for a better world (Chandy et al. 2021). Among these efforts, a significant stream of research has demonstrated that marketing practices can either increase or reduce inequity by denying or providing access to specific tangible or intangible resources (Ashik et al., 2025). However, less has been explored about how they can influence social inequity by imposing and legitimizing symbolic meanings.

Affecting inequity by imposing meanings through marketing practices is a form of "symbolic violence" (Southerton 2011). This Bourdieuian concept refers to the use of symbolic channels to perpetuate the existing social structure (Bourdieu 2001; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). In this research, we are interested in what happens when consumers start to notice this violence, as has occurred in some notorious boycotts, such as the "Economic Blackouts." We propose that consumers form a belief that marketing practices are used to perpetuate inequity because powerful groups profit from it. We will focus on the question: How can marketing researchers, practitioners, and policymakers understand how this belief impacts consumers' psychology and behavior?

Method and Data

This research aims to answer the previous question by introducing, conceptualizing, and developing a measurement scale for the *marketing-as-an-instrument-of-symbolic-violence* belief (MISVB). To develop and validate this scale measure, established procedures were followed (Churchill, 1979; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) as well as recent scale developments published in high-impact journals (e.g., Böttger et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2022). After the item generation and first depuration, four studies were conducted. In Study 1 (n = 412), the scale was statistically purified, validated, and shortened through iterative confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) and follow-up studies. In Study 2 (n = 147), the scale's content validity was experimentally tested by comparing known groups. In Study 3 (n = 204), the discriminant validity is tested by conducting a pairwise analysis of discriminant validity using two criteria: Fornell-Larcker and fit differences. Finally, in Study 4 (n = 407), the nomological validity is tested using path analysis, and initial insights about antecedents and consequences are proposed.

Key findings

The four studies showed that the scale has good psychometric properties. Study 1 and 2, employing a multi-method approach (pseudo-cognitive interviews and one experiment), demonstrated content validity. Study 3 tested the discriminant validity and showed that scale differs sufficiently from potentially similar scales, such as attitudes toward marketing practices (including price, retailing, advertising, and product quality) and conspiracy mentality. Finally, in Study 4, the exploration of the nomological network revealed that justice sensitivity, social norms, and experiences of subtle discrimination are positively related to MISVB on the side of the antecedents. On the side of consequences, MISVB is negatively related to the consumer's intention to advocate for their rights.

Key contributions

This article contributes to the literature on market violence by providing a tool that allows for the quantitative exploration of this phenomenon. Second, it contributes to the literature on lay beliefs about how marketing operates. This research addressed skepticism about the specific motive of keeping a social structure characterized by inequity. Third, it contributes to the literature on conspiracy beliefs by demonstrating that the belief that powerful groups have an interest in maintaining inequity in the social structure is not captured by a conspiracy mentality scale.

It also contributes to public policy by demonstrating that this belief influences consumers' intentions to advocate for their rights, which, in turn, directly impacts the work of the agencies responsible for consumer rights, as they rely on consumer reports to initiate investigations (e.g., FTC). Thus, monitoring this belief is essential for these agencies. Additionally, reforms

perceived as favorable to maintaining the status quo (e.g., reorganizing agencies that provide resources to those in need or shutting down programs that reduce inequities) could serve as fertile ground for the growth of the MISVB and retaliatory actions. Thus, understanding this belief is crucial for assessing how reforms are perceived and avoiding the radicalization of consumers' manifestations.

References are available upon request.

SERVICE DESIGN FOR HUMANITARIAN VALUE

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Keywords: Humanitarian Value, Service Design, Vulnerability, Resilience, Well-Being

Description: In this work, we explore how social service providers strive to increase resilience and eliminate the resource deprivations of poverty for the enhancement of individual and community well-being; our data points to Humanitarian Value as an approach that allows engagement with clients with varying levels of existing resources and capabilities.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Social service providers operate within uniquely precarious circumstances with persistent uncertainty around client needs, funding streams, and external threats. Specific to client needs, they must determine how to assist each individual based on the resources and capabilities available, in the context of their current circumstances. Traditional service design emphasizes the promotion of service use, focusing on customer loyalty and retention. However, social services ultimately work to reduce or eliminate the need for their service overall. Further, traditional services assume that clients enter the service interaction fully equipped to engage in the service. Conversely, social services must acknowledge the strengths *and* deficits their clients bring to the interaction and account for this in their service design. Taking differences between traditional and social services into account, the current research attempts to address gaps in extant knowledge surrounding how services are designed under the unique conditions faced by social service organizations.

Our work addresses two research questions: (1) How do social service providers design their services to reduce vulnerability and promote resiliency? (2) What approaches guide how providers engage with clients with varying levels of existing resources and capabilities?

Method and Data:

This study employs a qualitative approach, using semi-structured, depth interviews to explore the ways social service providers pursue humanitarian value. Our data come from social service providers from five cities across the United States. Participants represent social service agencies across a diverse set of service domains, including food, clothing, housing, furniture, health care, financial literacy, and employment assistance.

We conducted 19 interviews with 25 individuals who work in 17 different social service organizations. We asked the participants about their clients, how they designed appropriate interventions, the kinds of resources they could access, and the outcomes they worked to achieve. We also asked about their procedures and practices, as well as community impacts. Our analysis was informed by the conventions of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), and this research was guided by an existential-phenomenological philosophy (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989), to acquire a holistic understanding of the providers' experiences and concerns.

Summary of Findings:

We present three distinct approaches providers apply in pursuit of three forms of humanitarian value: (1) triaging to stabilize, (2) incubating to develop, and (3) empowering to liberate. While distinct, each of these approaches are united by a shared aim to improve clients' lives by reducing vulnerability and fostering resilience. Humanitarian value creation approaches are dynamic and adaptive, as they address evolving client and community needs.

Triaging meets the most critical and immediate needs of clients (Shultz et al. 2017). Providers pursue stabilization, a type of humanitarian value that helps clients reach a baseline of consumption adequacy (Martin and Hill 2012), by determining eligibility, assessing resources, and provisioning needs.

Incubation approaches focus on capacity building and development (O'Loughlin, Gummerus, and Kelleher 2024; Blocker and Barrios 2015). Providers help clients begin to realize their own agentic potential, how to use their voice and leverage current assets to access needed resources.

Empowerment approaches involve practices that help clients build sustainable resiliencies to reduce or eliminate their need for social services altogether. Providers help clients pursue their

own idiosyncratic goals and the realization of their increased agency in life choices and future possibilities (Essén, Värlander, and Liljedal 2016).

Key Contributions:

This research introduces the concept of humanitarian value as an outcome of social services designed to improve the well-being of populations experiencing precarity. We define humanitarian value as an approach to service delivery that addresses vulnerabilities and fosters resilience with the express purpose of improving human welfare for individuals and communities. Humanitarian value represents the overarching pursuit of social service firms as they work to meet the varied needs of their respective client populations. Understanding the forms of humanitarian value, and identifying points where it is lacking, has the potential to more effectively shape organizational and policy-based approaches to alleviating some of the most pervasive social issues such as poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, and lack of childcare, that manifest as wicked problems (Huff, et. al, 2017; Shultz et. al, 2024) because they seemingly defy any available solutions.

References are available upon request.

SHAPING INCLUSIVE POLICY FOR A VIRTUAL WORLD: ENSURING DISABILITY ACCEPTANCE IN THE METAVERSE

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Keywords: Metaverse, Desired self-identity, Advertisement value, Acceptance of disability, SDGs.

Description: This quantitative study examines how the Metaverse enhances social inclusion and self-perception for people with disabilities, exploring the impact of desired self-identity on Metaverse's perceived usefulness, advertisement value, and disability acceptance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

The importance of diversity and inclusivity on a worldwide scale, especially for people with disabilities (PWD), has recently taken center stage in public policy discussions. In the context of virtual reality, the Metaverse enhances increased acceptance, inclusion, and self-expression for this sizable group (Farah and Ramadan 2024). Nevertheless, there are also complicated issues with establishing a relationship between the disabled community and the Metaverse regarding the impact of advertising and its capacity to shape society's views of disability as the virtual and physical worlds become more interwoven (Radanliev et al. 2023).

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the desired self-identity of PWD and their perceived usefulness and perceived advertisement value in the context of the Metaverse. It also examines the influence of Metaverse ad value on the acceptance of disability. The findings reveal that by enabling individuals with disabilities to express their preferred self-identity through digital avatars, the Metaverse improves their social inclusion and self-perception. Specifically, the results demonstrate that a desired self-identity has a beneficial impact on the Metaverse's perceived usefulness and advertisement value, which in turn increases the acceptance of disability. These insights encourage international initiatives to decrease digital inequality by influencing inclusive digital regulations and marketing tactics.

Method and Data:

This study aims to investigate the impact of people with disability's desired self-identity on their perceived usefulness and perceived advertisement value in the context of the Metaverse, as well

as to demonstrate the influence of Metaverse ad value on the acceptance of disability. Hence, a quantitative approach was employed to examine how persons with disabilities view the Metaverse, concentrating on the ways in which their intended self-identity influences their perceptions of the usefulness, ad value, and acceptance of their disability. A closed-ended online survey was carried out with 437 PWD living in the UK who have accessed the Metaverse. The survey used validated scales with 7-point Likert scale for self-identity, perceived usefulness, ad value, and acceptance of disabilities. The clarity and validity were established through pilot testing with 50 individuals, for which ethical approval was acquired. Finally, to evaluate the factor validity of the data, LISREL and SPSS were used for data analysis.

Summary of Findings:

The data was first tested for reliability by assessing Cronbach's alpha which showed adequate internal consistency for the scales. Additionally, data showed that all unrotated variables loaded onto different factors.

The data was then tested for validity through LISREL using confirmatory factor analysis. All the indices had acceptable fits for the measurement model (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 2000; Browne and Cudeck 1993) as follows: Chi Square $\chi2=282$ (113), p-value=0.00, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.931, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.984, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.0570. As for the structural model fit, the indices came as follows: $\chi2=333$ (115), p-value=0.00, GFI = 0.921, CFI= 0.979, and RMSEA = 0.0638.

As hypothesized, desired self-identity had a direct impact on the perceived usefulness of the Metaverse platform (H1: β = .892, p < .001) and perceived ad value on the Metaverse (H2: β = .376, p < .001). The perceived usefulness of the Metaverse platform had a significant positive effect on perceived ad value on the Metaverse (H3: β = .490, p < .001) which in its turn had a direct impact on acceptance of disability (H4: β = .297, p < .001).

Key Contributions:

This research fills a major gap in the literature by examining the relationship between self-identity, disability, and virtual environments specifically the Metaverse. By illustrating how digital platforms may improve inclusivity and decrease barriers for persons with disabilities, it aligns with global policy objectives, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities) of the United Nations. Additionally, the study highlights the potential of the Metaverse to promote social inclusion and equity for vulnerable communities by addressing the Global Risk of digital inequality as identified by the World Economic Forum. The results support broad policy objectives to establish disability-friendly digital environments that allow them to represent who they are and participate actively in online markets. Moreover, the research broadens the current understanding of self-presentation and technology acceptance theories, emphasizing the social and psychological advantages of digital identities that are adjustable for marginalized populations. These findings highlight the need for more scholarly research on inclusive design theories and assistive technology to increase accessibility in virtual spaces.

References are available upon request.

TAILS WAG, CONSUMERS GAG: WHY WE'LL FEED INSECTS TO OUR PETS BUT NOT OURSELVES, A TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: food waste, insect protein, death-thought accessibility, identity

Description: In response to sustainability and health trends in which pet food companies increasingly utilize insect-based protein, the terror management, contagion, and identity literatures suggest an interesting relationship whereby insect protein triggers disgust and death-thought accessibility, leading to consumer unwillingness to eat insect protein or feed insect protein to their pets.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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Research Question: An increasing number of pet owners feed their pets high protein food; however, many consumers view insects as disgusting. The terror management, contagion, and identity literatures suggest an interesting relationship whereby insect protein triggers disgust and death-thought accessibility, leading to consumer unwillingness to eat insect protein, or feed insect protein to their pets. We predict pet owners are especially less likely to feed insect protein to their pets when they have a strong relationship with their pet, as an extension of their identity. How to best market these insect-based pet foods to unwilling consumers is important; how insect protein is portrayed will potentially impact the level of disgust. For example, more disgusting

insects (e.g. cockroaches) decrease willingness to try, while less disgusting insects (e.g. crickets), images of processed insect powder, and vague descriptions of insect-based protein reduce feelings of disgust.

Does insect protein trigger feelings of disgust and increase death-thought accessibility? How do these feelings impact consumer willingness to feed insect protein to pets? Is this impacted by the strength of the consumer-pet relationship and how closely consumers identify with their pets? Are firm attempts to portray insect protein in various ways effective in preventing triggering disgust and death-thought accessibility?

Method and Data: We conducted early, unstructured interviews to explore consumer feelings about consuming insect protein. A convenience sample of participants was asked about their feelings regarding consuming insect protein. Two additional experimental studies will test the hypotheses developed from background literature and these interviews. First, based on the terror management theory and contagion literatures, we predict that thoughts of consuming insect protein trigger feelings of disgust, increasing mortality salience and death-thought accessibility. Second, based on the terror management theory literature, we predict that this increased mortality salience and death-thought accessibility reduces consumers' desire to try insect protein themselves, and to a lesser extent, their willingness to feed insect protein to their pets. Third, based on the terror management theory and identity literatures we predict that pet owners who closely identify with their pets are less likely to feed their pets insect protein. Fourth, based on the contagion literature, we predict that insect protein portrayals impact disgust: more disgusting insects increase disgust and less disgusting insects, insect powder, and vague descriptions reduce disgust.

Summary of Findings: Exploratory interviews confirm sensory (e.g. concern over the texture) and contagion-related disgust (e.g. they are dirty and could carry diseases) amongst individuals, as well as unfamiliarity (e.g. they have never seen insect protein as an ingredient for consumption), and death-related thoughts (e.g. not wanting to eat appendages of dead bugs, thinking about the bodies of dead bugs, and fearing bugs). Participants expressed curiosity in trying insect protein, however, due to its nutritional value and eco-friendliness. They expressed their willingness to try insect protein if it was in powder form, if they learned more about it, and if it were recommended by others. These early interviews helped us develop our initial hypotheses for forthcoming experimental studies related to fear, disgust, contagion, and death-related thoughts. A reading of literature on identity and terror management theory extends our hypotheses to an exploration of pet owners' willingness to feed their pets insect protein, as well as potential marketing strategies related to how insect protein is portrayed.

Key Contributions: Our research on entomophagy, the practice of eating insects, addresses issues raised by several United Nations goals (Goals 2, 11, 12, and 13) and the primary global risk according to the World Economic Forum (extreme weather events related to critical changes to Earth systems, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and natural resource shortages). American pets eat more meat than most countries in the world; humans in only four countries eat more meat than American pets. The pet food industry has made strides toward utilizing more insect-based protein, which are more sustainably raised, as opposed to traditional protein sources. Pound for pound of protein, raising insects utilizes less land, less water, and less food. Additionally, insects eat byproducts from other industries that would otherwise go to waste. Our research combines terror management theory, contagion theory, and the identity literature to investigate how companies can most effectively portray insect protein to consumers, to reduce

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consumers' gut reactions of disgust, and increase the likelihood that they choose an insect-based

pet food for their pet. This finding would be particularly helpful in convincing consumers who

view their pets as an extension of their identity, as many consumers are unlikely to eat insect

protein themselves.

**THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT OF ADDED SUGARS: LEARNINGS FROM
METANALYSES**

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Keywords: added sugar, smoking, soda, sugar sweetened beverages.

Description: This article looks to provide undisputed generalization, across marketing, nutrition, and marketing, about the relationship between added sugar to packaged products and consumer health.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

 This paper synthesizes findings from reviews and meta-analyses of literatures in medicine, nutrition, and marketing on the health impact of added sugars. It focuses particularly on the impact of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and processed carbohydrate-rich foods.

Method and Data

We performed a literature search starting with a Google Scholar followed by specific key databases searches namely Medline and Business Search Priemer. Our search focused on terms such as high sugar drinks foods, suga** foods on Google Scholar leading us to several papers in intersecting fields. We manually reviewed the papers and categorized them based on their respective fields—medicine, nutrition, economics, marketing, and public policy.

Summary of Findings

This analysis led to six important findings.

1. Research from various disciplines suggests that excessive added sugar intake significantly contributes to metabolic syndrome. This syndrome includes a cluster of diseases including obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. It affects roughly 25% of U.S. adults (Falkner & Cossrow, 2014; Beltrán et al., 2013).

2. Additionally, systematic reviews indicate that dietary patterns high in refined carbohydrates and added sugars are robustly associated with increased all-cause mortality (English et al., 2021). It supports current dietary guidelines that recommend limiting added sugars to less than 10% of total daily calories. In children and adolescents, an increased consumption of sugar-sweetened food correlates with an elevated body mass index, obesity, dental caries, and insulin resistance (Bleich & Vercammen, 2018; Park et al., 2023).

    Epidemiological data such as from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) point towards sugar-sweetened beverages, fruit drinks, and teas as the predominant sources of added sugars. Vulnerable populations, including children, adolescents, low-income groups, and ethnic minorities consume a disproportionate amount of such high sugar products; for example, Hispanics derive a greater proportion of their daily sugar intake from sodas compared to Asians (Ricciuto et al., 2021). Households with lower socioeconomic status, including recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are more likely to consume unhealthy, sugar-dense products (NCHS Data Brief 271; Garasky et al., 2016).

3. The role of marketing can potentially create public health challenges in the backdrop of the sugar sweetened beverage market. Manufacturers employ sophisticated advertising strategies that promote both traditional and ostensibly "healthier" sugary products. Empirical evidence shows that advertising exposure, particularly among children, can increase immediate consumption of high-sugar foods and beverages (Boyland et al., 2016; Story et al., 2004). Such tactics, combined with minimal regulatory oversight, delay the implementation of effective public health measures.

    Policy interventions such as warning labels and fiscal measures show promise in mitigating sugar consumption. Studies show that warning labels—especially those incorporating graphic elements and explicit health information—can significantly reduce the odds of selecting Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (An et al., 2021). Some authors (Glanz et al., 2012; Pomeranz, 2012) call for promoting healthier dietary practices and reducing health dispariti.es across diverse population groups. Furthermore, soda taxes, which have raised prices by approximately 33%, correlate with reductions in beverage purchases (Kaplan et al., 2024). Mandatory front-of-package (FOP) labeling improve consumer dietary choices and incentivizes healthier product reformulations (Ikonen et al., 2020; Shangguan et al., 2019).

4. Yet, the marketing of sugar-added foods and drinks continues with little regulation, like smoking before regulation. In recent years, soda companies have expanded their line of products to include energy drinks categorized under dietary supplements as opposed to soft drink beverages and continue to heavily market craft-like sodas. The self-claimed "healthy" soda group claims to contain up until now unique benefits such as instant

energy, electrolyte restoration, and pro- and pre-biotics. The group asserts beneficial

consumption of such products. So, this category has drawn sports enthusiasts and

adolescents, with young adults being the largest consumers (Radian Insights, Dec 2018).

5. Looking back, cigarette marketers denied the harm from smoking, hid their addictive

    properties, and resisted any efforts at regulation of smoking or marketing of cigarettes for

    decades.

6. Collectively, the integrated evidence underscores the urgent need for comprehensive

    governmental regulation of added sugars. Policy makers must consider curbing

    consumption of sugars through labels, advertisement restrictions, taxes, or outright bans.

Statement of Key Contributions

A vast number of studies in marketing, nutrition, and medicine have addressed the issue of the

marketing and consumption of foods, sometimes resulting in preventable diseases, and the need

for policy regarding public health. The large numbers of studies have led to reviews (including

meta-analyses) of these literatures. However, these reviews have typically been done within the

confines of each of these literatures. There is a need for an integrative review of these reviews in

order to draw broad conclusions about public policy, health, and marketing (Glanz et al. 2012).

This paper attempts to accomplish this goal.

References are available upon request.

UNDERSTANDING PRISON FOOD PRACTICES TO REDUCE WASTE IN CARCERAL CONTEXTS

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Keywords: Food waste; prison environment; consumer vulnerability; agency; public policy

Description: This study addresses a critical gap by examining the food practices of inmates and the mechanisms behind food waste in a French prison.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Food waste is an unavoidable political, economic, media and academic issue. On the academic front, marketing studies on food waste have mainly focused on waste in stores, in households or in catering establishments. However, very limited research in marketing has been carried out into food practices and waste in the public food service sector. Unlike schools or hospitals, the carceral context poses unique challenges and socio-symbolic dynamics that impact consumption behaviors. Our research focuses on the prison environment, where food waste is massive, resulting in value destruction for several stakeholders.

Theoretical Framework

The social sciences have long invested food to show its social, cultural, material and symbolic dimensions (e.g. Levi-Strauss, 1964 and Douglas, 1984). The framework is enriched by marketing literature on sustainable and ethical consumption (e.g., Clauzel et al., 2021), which emphasizes the interplay between structural constraints and individual behavior. This allows us to interpret prison food waste not as irrational behavior, but as a meaningful act embedded in a system of social meanings, economic scarcity, and institutional disempowerment.

Drawing on Hill and Sharma (2020), we conceptualize prisoners as vulnerable consumers whose choices are restricted not only by the physical constraints of incarceration but also by structural and symbolic limitations. In this context, the concept of agency becomes critical. Following Lamberton et al. (2024), we examine how prisoners attempt to regain control over their consumption choices, with food becoming a primary site for reasserting autonomy and identity.

Methodology

A 15-month multi-method study was conducted in a 450-bed men's prison in France. Methods included participatory observations (n=78), 35 in-depth interviews with inmates and staff, and a quantitative survey (n=231; 41% response rate). Observations covered kitchens, distribution corridors, and inmate cells.

Findings

Four dominant misconceptions were identified and deconstructed:

1. "The shelf trolley's no good"

While dissatisfaction with pre-prepared meals is high (70%), qualitative data reveal that deeper stigma is associated with being seen as "indigent," prompting some inmates to reject meals despite hunger.

2. "I never take the shelf trolley"

Only 16% of inmates avoid it entirely. Most strategically extract usable items (e.g., fruit, raw vegetables) to combine with personal supplies, indicating partial appropriation rather than full rejection.

3. "They don't know anything about cooking"

Contrary to this belief, 75% learned to cook during incarceration, often through peer and familial support, reflecting active knowledge acquisition and resilience.

4. "They are children, they are irresponsible"

Cooking emerges as an act of resistance and agency. Inmates who prepare their own meals often maintain cleaner cells and engage in physical activity, reinforcing self-discipline and identity.

Contributions

Theoretically, the study introduces the concept that agency in food choice and preparation reduces waste by restoring dignity and identity. It extends consumer vulnerability and sustainable consumption literature into the underexplored context of incarceration.

Managerially, the research supports redesigning prison food systems. Inspired by Danish models and food welfare proposals, it advocates offering inmates a choice between a ready-made meal or a budget for raw food purchases. This shift could destigmatize consumption, reduce waste, and promote inmate autonomy.

In termes of public policy, findings were presented to the French Ministries of Justice and Agriculture, offering actionable insights for national prison food reforms. Implementing inclusive food systems may improve inmate well-being, align with European human rights standards, and reduce systemic waste.

References are available upon request

WEAPONIZING HUMAN BIASES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF

MISINFORMATION SPREAD BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENTS ON

SOCIAL MEDIA

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Keywords: cognitive biases, misinformation spread, AI agents, bots, social media

Description: This study studied the persuasion impact of eight bias-triggering tactics

employed by AI agents, a.k.a. Bots, and Human users in spreading misinformation and

engaging online users.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In 2024, the World Economic Forum highlighted misinformation—defined as false or

misrepresented information—as a greatest threat to mankind. During the COVID-19

pandemic, misinformation on social media surged by an estimated 900% within the first

three months. This threat is further amplified by the creation and dissemination of

misinformation by social media bots (Bots), which are Artificial Intelligence (AI) agents

that "*imitate legitimate users posting content*," as defined by the US Department of

Homeland Security. Such misinformation and bots on social media platforms erode trust and authenticity, presenting significant risks to the integrity of advertising services and brand reputations for firms engaged in digital marketing.

It is hypothesized that Bot authors deliberately craft online misinformation aimed at triggering and exploiting human cognitive biases, thereby enhancing engagement and persuasive influence. This study investigates this hypothesis by studying the triggers of biases embedded in Bot-authored COVID-19 vaccine-related misinformation and comparing them with their counterparts, Human-authored misinformation. We aimed to study the following questions:

RQ1: What are the triggers of human biases in large-scale online misinformation, such as COVID-19 vaccine discourses?

RQ2: To what extent did the bias-triggering tactics on social media facilitate the engagement of online users with Bot-authored misinformation?

Method and Data

Misinformation Dataset. We compiled a comprehensive *Misinfo* Dataset that contains COVID-19 vaccine-related misinformation tweets annotated by Bots *vs.* Humans, from Twitter from July 2020 to July 2021. Specifically, using Twitter Developer API, we collected English tweets related to the discovery and dissemination of the COVID-19 vaccine. We then adopted a public annotated misinformation dataset to label the misinformation tweets through TwHIN-BERT embeddings with at least 80% cosine distance similarity. To differentiate between Bot and Human users, we used the

BotHunter algorithm that consists of several random forests models trained on manually annotated Bot/Human tweets.

Computational Detection Algorithm for Bias Triggers. We developed an innovative algorithm to automate the identification of eight bias triggers from tweet texts. The eight covered biases include Homophily Bias, Authority Bias, Availability Bias, Illusory Truth Effect, Affect Bias, Negativity Bias, Cognitive Dissonance, and Confirmation Bias.

The detection algorithm is developed through a comprehensive literature review of the cognitive biases, an extensive search for known trigger instances of the eight biases in the literature, and an attentive design by incorporating defined detection levels (single tweet, user, or multiple tweets over time) and thresholds (the floor value of the mean), supplemented by observations in the Misinfo dataset.

Summary of Findings

We studied the relationship between various bias triggers and the engagement of corresponding tweets, differentiating between Bots and Human users. The descriptive analysis showed that Bots applied triggers in misinformation tweets much more heavily and widely. Availability Bias and Cognitive Dissonance were the two most prevalent biases triggered by both Bots and Humans. However, the percentage of tweets that embedded these bias triggers was two times higher in Bot tweets compared to Human tweets. Not many Human tweets used triggers of Affect Bias and Negativity Bias, while Bot tweets still presented a significant percentage of these two bias triggers.

Regression analysis revealed that triggers of different biases can have varying impacts on misinformation engagement. In addition, online users were more sensitive to the triggers

of biases embedded in the misinformation tweet during the decision making of liking and retweeting than replying and quoting. Results also showed that bias-triggering tactics have been more influential on Bot-authored tweets than Human-authored tweets. While certain bias triggers boosted engagement for Bot-authored tweets, some other bias triggers unexpectedly decreased engagement. Biases such as Availability Bias and Cognitive Dissonance were potentially responsible for the spread of COVID-19 misinformation when purposefully exploited by Bots.

Key Contributions

Theoretical Contributions. Our study is the first to systematically investigate the triggers of human biases used by AI-Agents (Bots) and Human users in the large-scale spread of online misinformation. Our work contributes to the Information Systems, Marketing, and Tech Ethics literature by providing a theoretical framework to identify, monitor and assess user engagement that is promoted by bias triggers across different user identities and social events on social media platforms. The results also contributed to our understanding of the spread of online misinformation during a global crisis.

Practical Contributions. The study has several practical applications to the regulation of social media platforms and cyber security agencies in the following three ways:

a) Curated a COVID-19 misinformation dataset of approximately 3 million tweets, contributing to the continuing AI transparency conversations, encouraging accountability among social media companies for managing digital communications.

b) Developed a computational algorithm that detects bias triggers in online misinformation, advancing methodologies for identifying and mitigating harmful AI-generated content.

c) Documented the impact of human biases utilized by AI Bots. This study highlights the societal and ethical risks of biased technology and unregulated AI systems in influencing public opinion.

TITLE: Who Knows More Online: Parents or their Children? Exploring the Role of Parents in their Children's Online Behaviors

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Keywords: children's online privacy protection, children and parents' online privacy knowledge, parental styles, children's online risk behaviors

Description: The purpose of our paper is to examine the role of parental and child online privacy knowledge and parental styles (e.g., supportive, authoritative) on use of parental monitoring/privacy controls and their children's online risk behaviors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Based on our hypothesized "Parent – Child Online Knowledge and Safety Framework," the purpose of our first study is to examine the role of parental online privacy knowledge and

parental styles (e.g., supportive, authoritative) on use of parental monitoring/privacy controls and perceptions of their children's online risk behaviors. Study 2 examines parent-child dyads to determine if parent and child online privacy knowledge, supportive parental style, and use of parental controls will influence the child's online positive and risky privacy behaviors. Finally, Study 3 will examine whether parents of children aged 6-15 years who are randomly exposed to a privacy education video, identical quiz with feedback, or a control group will help improve their parental online privacy knowledge and their role of being supportive in affecting their child's online privacy behaviors. A special focus will be on parents with lower socioeconomic status (SES) and opportunity limitations (e.g., work, time) in helping their children with online privacy.

Method And Data

Following IRB approval, 613 parents with children aged 6-15 participated in Study 1 using the Prodege panel. Based on child development theory (John 1999), parents were split in thirds across the following categories for their child: 6-7 yrs, 8-12 yrs., or 13-15 yrs. All children were screened for reading and parental demographics were used as controls / covariates in the analyses. We gathered responses for two primary independent variables: (1) perceptions of being a supportive parent (coefficient $\alpha = .80$) (Darling and Steinberg 1993) and (2) a 15-item POPS scale (coefficient $\alpha = .85$) measuring the parent's objective knowledge of online privacy safety. This measure was adapted slightly for an adult sample based on the reliable and valid COPS measure for children developed by Andrews et al. (2023). Responses to two primary dependent variables included: (1) the degree to which parents monitored or placed controls on their child's online behaviors (four, 5-point items, coefficient $\alpha = .80$; Livingstone et al. 2017) and (2) parent perceptions of nine risky online behaviors of their child (Andrews et al. 2023). Extensions to

parental-child dyads in Study 2 were just completed and experimental work to improve parental online privacy knowledge in Study 3 is underway.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, when the score on the Parent Online Privacy Scale (POPS) was high (1 SD above its mean), and being a supportive parent was high (1 SD above its mean), parental monitoring on their child's online behavior was highest (M = 4.74 of 5) and their child avoided risky behaviors the most (M = 8.73 of 9). When POPS was low (1 SD below its mean), and supportive parent was low (1 SD below its mean), parental monitoring of their child's online behavior was lowest (M = 3.99) and the child avoided risky behaviors behavior the least (M = 6.62). Key findings for Study 2 with 918 parent – child dyads are that COPS affects the child's online postive and risky behaviors, and interacts with POPS and being supportive on these behaviors. Also, POPS (M=12.38) is significantly higher than COPS (M=10.66; p<.001). Study 3 will include an experiment with 600 lower SES parents of children 6-15 years randomly exposed to a privacy education video, identical quiz with feedback, or a control to help improve parental online privacy knowledge and effects on their child's online behaviors, like cognitive online privacy defenses developed by children (Andrews, Walker, and Kees 2020).

Statement of Key Contributions to Marketing and Public Policy

The Federal Trade Commission (2025) updated their Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (2000) for children under 13 based on COPPA (1998). This requires (1) an opt-in, verifiable parent consent for targeted advertising and personal information for third parties, (2) personal information retention only as long as "reasonably necessary," and (3) "safe harbor" programs to publicly disclose information collected. The revision did not limit push notifications or educational technology. Although the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) with COPPA2 passed the

Senate and was to prevent personal information collection from those under 17 without consent, it did not pass the House. Recently, this proposed legislation was re-introduced for passage. Instagram (Meta) now requires all under 15 to show age verification through parent permission, uploaded IDs, or face-based AI prediction tools (Jargon 2024). Yet, Meta's chatbots sent inappropriate messages to teens following these changes (WSJ 2025). This overall focus remains on legislation, as opposed to a key understanding of exactly how much parents and their children *actually know and use* in support and control of their children's online activity and behaviors. Our studies help answer these important questions for public health policy, including planned education efforts to enhance parental online privacy knowledge.

References are available upon request.

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