

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



Shhh... Don't Tell: Divergent Effects of
Secrecy on Enjoyment
By

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Date : 26 Jul 2019 (FRI)
Time : 10:30 am – 12:00 nn
Venue : M802

Abstract

Prior psychological research on secrecy has largely focused on the negative effects of secrecy. We add to the secrecy literature by examining the positive effects of secrecy and contend that secrecy may create a polarizing effect on secret keepers: when an activity is expected to elicit positive (negative) social responses, keeping it as a secret (vs. not) increases (decreases) enjoyment. We also contribute to this literature by offering a nuanced understanding of the mechanism through which secrecy creates a polarizing effect on enjoyment. This mechanism delineates the roles of the secret keepers' anticipation of outcomes of secret revelation, i.e., savoring (dread) of the expected positive (negative) social response, and their level of cognitive burden resulting from the process of secret keeping. We further predict and find that the mediation path of outcome anticipation is moderated by the valence of expected social responses, but the mediation path of cognitive burden is not. In addition, we contribute to the literature by investigating the moderators (level of preoccupation with a secret, social distance between the two parties involved in a secret) of the secrecy effects on enjoyment.

Dr Xiaoyan Deng is Associate Professor of Marketing at the Fisher College of Business, the Ohio State University. She received her Ph.D. in Marketing from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. She conducts experimental research in the area of consumer behavior. Her research specifically investigates the interplays between sensation, perception, and cognition, with a special focus on the role of design in consumer judgment, decision, and behavior. Her research has appeared in top-tier marketing journals such as the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. Her research has been covered by national media outlets, including *New York Times*, *PBS*, *Science Daily*, etc. She was named Marketing Science Institute (MSI) "Young Scholar" in 2017. She currently serves on the Editorial Review Board of *Journal of Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing*.

All interested are welcome.



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