

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



How and Why Consumers Behave Differently on Mobile Devices

By

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Date : 20 Apr 2022 (WED)

Time : 9:30 am – 11:00 am

Venue : Online via Zoom

Abstract

Consumer behavior is increasingly occurring on mobile devices. Two projects examine how decision-making differs on a mobile device (e.g., smartphone) versus a non-mobile device (e.g., desktop). The first project examines donation behavior. While donors prefer helping beneficiaries who are located nearby, often overlooking those who are faraway (Cavanaugh, Bettman, and Luce 2015; Duclos and Barasch 2014; Touré-Tillery and Fishbach 2017; Winterich, Mittal, and Ross 2009), the present research reveals that soliciting donors via mobile devices can reduce this inequity in charitable giving. Using a mobile device reduces perceptions of relative distance, which eliminates preference to donate to beneficiaries who are geographically closer. We test this across six studies, including a field experiment and four additional studies examining real monetary contributions. The second project looks more broadly at behavior on mobile devices and identifies a “smartphone bias” whereby consumers on a smartphone predict their performance on decision-making tasks will be worse than when on a personal computer [PC], even in situations where there is no impact of device. Studies show that the smartphone bias has attitudinal (e.g., decision-making confidence) and behavioral (e.g., choice deferral) consequences. In addition, we identify the causes of this bias; consumers feel that being on a smartphone makes them less thoughtful and this drives their lowered performance predictions.

Dr Claudia Townsend is an associate professor of marketing at the Miami Herbert Business School, University of Miami. She performs research on consumer behavior and decision-making. Specifically, she examines how aesthetics and the visual presentation of information influences judgment and choice, branding, how people decide to donate, and consumer technology interaction. Her research has been published in the top academic marketing journals including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Journal of Marketing Research* and covered by the popular press including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, and NPR’s *Marketplace*. She serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Marketing* and on the editorial review board of *Journal of Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing Research*. Dr Townsend also has industry experience in market research and economic consulting and has consulted for Fortune 500 companies as well as start-up businesses. Dr Townsend received her PhD at UCLA’s Anderson School of Management and B.A. from Brown University graduating magna cum laude with honors.

All interested are welcome.



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