

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



You're Not Who I was Expecting: Mindset Determines Customer Responses to Employee Diversity By

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Date : 29 Mar 2023 (WED)
Time : 10 – 11:30 am
Venue : M802

Abstract

As companies increasingly value a diversified workforce by including more minority representatives in the workplace, it is imperative to understand customers' responses to employee diversity. The present research explores how customer mindset (a growth mindset vs. a fixed mindset) shapes their responses to employee diversity in terms of gender, nationality, and race/ethnicity. Across six studies, including two field studies, we found that customers with a growth mindset respond more favorably toward the minority employee compared to those with a fixed mindset, while customers with a fixed mindset respond more favorably toward the majority employee than the minority employee. Importantly, the positive effect of the growth (vs. fixed) mindset toward the minority employee can be explained by cognitive flexibility, while the negative effect of the fixed mindset toward the minority (vs. majority) employee is due to the naturalness bias in performance attribution (emphasizing talent rather than effort). Thus, by highlighting the natural talent of the minority employee, companies can attenuate the potential bias among customers with a fixed mindset toward the minority employee. Findings from this research contribute to a better understanding of customers' responses to employee diversity, and also offer practical implications for marketers and policymakers.

Prof. Hean Tat Keh is a Professor and Head of the Department of Marketing at Monash Business School. His current research examines consumer psychology in the contexts of sustainable marketing, healthcare marketing, and services marketing. He has published in leading journals such as *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. He is a recipient of both the ANZMAC Distinguished Marketing Researcher and ANZMAC Distinguished Marketing Educator awards. Professor Keh has previously taught at the University of Queensland, Peking University, and the National University of Singapore. He obtained his PhD at the University of Washington, Seattle.

All interested are welcome.



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