

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



Divine Contentment: How God Salience Affects the Desire for Self-Improvement Products By

Dr Keisha Cutright
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Date : 7 May 2019 (TUE)
Time : 10:30 am – 12:00 nn
Venue : M802

Abstract

Consumers across generations and from around the world often desire to become better versions of themselves. Reflecting this interest in self-improvement, the marketplace offers consumers a wide range of products and services that promise to improve or better the consumer in some way. But, in a world with unlimited opportunities to spend one's time and money, what influences whether consumers will invest in products that enable self-improvement? We demonstrate that the degree to which God is salient has a negative effect on individuals' preferences for consumption choices with self-improvement features compared to equally attractive options that do not. We propose that this is because thoughts of God activate a greater sense of contentment with one's current state, making self-improvement a lower priority. We demonstrate this basic effect across several experiments as well as archival data, address alternative explanations, and identify important boundary conditions. We also show that our effect is mitigated when self-improvement is focused on benefiting others or one's spiritual needs, and when God is not perceived to be benevolent or emphasizes improvement rather than contentment.

Dr Keisha Cutright is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She received her Ph.D. in Marketing from Duke in 2011, and was a faculty member at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania before returning to Duke.

Her research explores the psychological drivers of consumer behavior, often addressing issues related to religion, personal control, culture and emotion. Her work has been published in top-tier academic journals, including *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Marketing Science*. She also serves on the Editorial Boards for the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Marketing Research* and the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. Popular accounts of her work have appeared in outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *NewsWeek*, *Time*, and *Fast Company*. Prior to beginning her career in academia, she worked in brand management at Procter and Gamble. She teaches Strategic Brand Management and was previously named one of the world's best 40 b-school professors under the age of 40 by Poets and Quants.

All interested are welcome.



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