

“Making Malleability Predictable: Tree Models of Consumer Judgment and Choice”

12/02, 3:00 p.m. in Room 741 JMHH

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ABSTRACT

Many marketing decisions rely on self-reports obtained in surveys or experimental studies. In these studies, consumers are expected to express accurately their true thoughts and beliefs, choices and intentions as well as many other aspects of themselves and their behaviors. Although collecting such data has been successful in many cases, limitations become apparent, for instance, when studying private behaviors or choices under different frames. Researchers focusing on topics such as determinants of insider trading or digital product piracy as examples of non-compliant behaviors or on determinants of planned adoptions of new products or donation intentions as examples of idealistic behaviors cannot rely on the assumption that self-reports are candid and accurate. Similarly, researchers focusing on product choices cannot assume that the reported preferences are stable and insensitive to the context of the study. Instead, in both examples it is critical to take into account that consumers do not only differ in their values and behaviors under study but also in other aspects that affect their responses. More generally, a modeling approach is needed for the analysis of judgments and preferences that allows for responses to be influenced by multiple, possibly conflicting, goals and processes. I will present such an approach and illustrate it with applications on regulatory compliance, cognitive reflection, and compromise effects.