

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

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When: 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

CAUSAL BELIEFS IN IDENTITY AND CONSUMPTION

ABSTRACT: Personal identity is an important determinant of consumers' behavior. However, questions remain about why people with seemingly similar identities often behave differently, and how multiple aspects of identity interact to shape behavior. In this talk, I present a novel approach to the self-concept that focuses on beliefs about the relationships between aspects of the self-concept. More specifically, I propose that aspects of the self-concept are seen as defining of an individual to the extent that they are perceived as causally central, causally connected to many other aspects of the self-concept. I present evidence that relative to causally peripheral features (features that have relatively fewer connections to other features of the self-concept), causally central features are 1) perceived as more disruptive to the self-concept when changed and, 2) more strongly influence behavior. Finally, I extend my causal centrality approach to brand identity. I present evidence that consumers' beliefs about the causal relationships between the aspects of a brand influence their assessments of these features and the effect that changes to these features have on brand loyalty.