

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, December 9, 2019

Where: 370 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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The Aptly Buried “I” in Experience: Experiential Purchases Foster Social Connection

ABSTRACT:

Experiential purchases (focused on doing rather than having) provide more enduring satisfaction than material goods. Here we examine an important downstream consequence of spending money on experiences: fostering social connection. In an initial experiment, consumers report feeling more kinship with someone who has made a similar experiential purchase than someone who has made a similar material purchase (or no similar purchase). This result is tied to the greater centrality of experiential purchases to the consumer’s identity. A follow-up experiment explores whether the greater sense of social connection that experiences provide applies even in situations in which someone else has made a similar, but superior purchase—when negative comparisons to others are brought to mind. Next, we find that people feel more connected to others in general, not just those who have made the same purchase, when they reflect on their experiential consumption. We then demonstrate that these feelings of connection are behaviorally expressed in a greater desire to engage in social activities when participants are primed about their experiences than when primed about their possessions.

