

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar

**Get Your Science Out of Here:
When Does Invoking Science in
Marketing Consumer Products Backfire?**
By

Prof. Rebecca Walker Reczek
The Ohio State University



Date : 10 Feb 2022 (THU)
Time : 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Venue : Online via Zoom

Abstract

In this research, we propose that although consumers view the scientific process as competent, they also perceive it as cold. Across ten experimental studies, including incentive compatible study designs, we demonstrate that these lay beliefs impact consumers' reactions to marketers touting the science behind their brands. Specifically, since hedonic attributes are associated with warmth, the coldness associated with the scientific process is conceptually disfluent with the anticipated warmth of hedonic products and attributes, reducing product valuation. In contrast, when products are positioned as utilitarian, invoking science in marketing appeals has a positive effect, as the perceived competence of the scientific process is compatible with the competence associated with utilitarian products. We further demonstrate that when the necessity of science to create a hedonic product is made salient and thus more fluent, this backfire effect is attenuated. Finally, we identify three theoretically and practically relevant individual differences (i.e., endorsement of the lay belief, trust in scientists, and whether the consumer works in a STEM field) that moderate the backfire effect of pairing science with hedonically positioned products.

Prof. Rebecca Walker Reczek is the Berry Chair of New Technologies in Marketing and Professor of Marketing at the Fisher College of Business at The Ohio State University. She received her Ph.D. in marketing from The University of Texas at Austin. Prof. Reczek's research focuses on the area of consumer behavior. Specifically, her research has explored consumer lay theories and inference making, self-perceptions, and ethical decision making. Current projects continue to explore these areas, as well as online consumer behavior and consumer response to promotions. Prof. Reczek's research has appeared in leading marketing and psychology journals, and she is currently serving as Associate Editor at the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Marketing*, and the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*.

All interested are welcome.



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