

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar

Psychological Determinants of Product Replacement By



Prof. Mathew Isaac
Seattle University

Date : 24 Jun 2025 (TUE)
Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon
Venue : M802, PolyU

Abstract

This talk explores two psychological factors that influence product replacement decisions. Companies often provide visual guidelines to help consumers decide when to replace products such as water filters, razor blades, or engine oil. Joint work with Poornima Vinoo (Indian School of Business), Grant Donnelly (Ohio State University), and Aaron Brough (Utah State University) identifies a novel effect of categorization—"lifestage bias"—in which representing a product's lifespan with more (vs. fewer) stages prompts earlier replacement. This effect occurs because consumers are more likely to conclude that a product has been used sufficiently if it has completed more stages. A second project, with Elisa Konya-Baumbach (Bern University) and Rebecca Reczek (Ohio State University), reveals that consumers hold two conflicting lay theories with respect to a marketer's product lifespan claim (e.g., "Product X lasts 18 months"): an "overstated" lay theory wherein consumers expect the lifespan given by the marketer to be longer than the product's true lifespan, and an "understated" lay theory in which they judge this anchor to be shorter than the actual lifespan. The lay theory that is dominant—either naturally or due to situational factors (e.g., consumer roles, language cues in the claim)—affects inferences that consumers make about marketer motives and their subsequent product replacement decisions.

Prof. Mathew Isaac is Chair of the Marketing Department, Thomas F. Gleed Chair of Business Administration, and Professor of Marketing at the Seattle University Albers School of Business and Economics. He is a 2024 MSI Scholar, current Associate Editor for *Journal of Marketing Research* and *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, and past Associate Editor for *Journal of Consumer Research* who serves on the Editorial Review Board for *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of Advertising*, and *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*. Prof. Isaac's research, which examines how contextual and motivational factors influence product evaluations and purchase intentions, has been published in leading journals, including *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. He obtained his PhD in Marketing from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in 2010. Prior to entering academia, Prof. Isaac advised media, healthcare, and private equity clients as a Consultant and Manager for Bain & Company and ZS Associates.

All interested are welcome.



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