

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar

Being Your (Not-So) Best Self: How Self-Diagnosticity Shapes Motivation and Virtue By



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Northwestern University

Date : 20 Apr 2026 (Mon)
Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon
Venue : M802, PolyU

Abstract

Most people wish to maintain a positive self-concept and thus often behave virtuously (e.g., choosing healthy foods, donating to charity, spending responsibly) in an effort to present themselves to themselves in a favorable light (i.e., self-signaling). However, we only need to look around to see that people do not always behave in the most virtuous ways. This is because the motivation to engage in such self-signaling behaviors is not always present. Specifically, this motivation is particularly low when people perceive their actions as unrepresentative of the type of person they are (i.e., as low in self-diagnosticity; Touré-Tillery and Fishbach 2012, 2015). Across a series of studies, we find that people behave less virtuously when they (a) expect to forget (vs. remember) their choices (Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki 2021; Touré-Tillery and Light 2018), (b) perceive their choices as less (vs. more) real (Touré-Tillery and Wang 2022), (c) have an unclear (vs. clear) sense of self (Wang and Touré-Tillery 2024), or (d) are part of a small (vs. large) audience (Jia, Touré-Tillery, and Wang, under revision), because such choices seem less self-diagnostic.

Prof. Rima Touré-Tillery is an associate professor of marketing at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. She holds a PhD from the University of Chicago, Booth School of Business. Her research is at the intersection of motivation and identity, focusing on the ways in which people's desire to maintain a positive view of themselves influences their judgment, motivation, and behavior. Her work explores a wide range of consumer behaviors—from charitable giving and cheating to healthy eating and saving—with implications for marketers, managers, and public policy makers. Her investigations have produced peer-reviewed articles in top marketing and psychology journals such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Marketing*, and the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. Additionally, several media outlets have featured her findings, including The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, The Hill, The New Yorker, and Chicago Magazine.

All interested are welcome.



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