

Katie S. Mehr

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Employment

Alberta School of Business, University of Alberta
Assistant Professor of Marketing

July 2023 - Present

Education

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

2018 - 2023

Ph.D. in Operations, Information, and Decisions – Decision Processes

Dissertation Title: How Does Rating Specific Features of an Experience Alter Consumers' Overall Evaluation of That Experience?

Dissertation Committee: Joseph Simmons (advisor), Alice Moon, Deborah Small

Rutgers University, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick Campus

2014 - 2018

B.S. *summa cum laude* with Highest Honors in Economics, Minors in Mathematics and Statistics

Publications and Manuscripts in the Review Process

(abstracts on page 4, * indicates shared first authorship, + indicates graduate student)

Mehr, Katie S. and Joseph P. Simmons (2024), “How Does Rating Specific Features of an Experience Alter Consumers’ Overall Evaluation of That Experience?” *Journal of Consumer Research*, forthcoming.

Select press coverage: The Wall Street Journal ([link](#)), University of Alberta Folio ([link](#))

Mehr, Katie S., Amanda E. Geiser, Katherine L. Milkman, and Angela L. Duckworth (2020), “Copy Paste Prompts: A New Nudge to Promote Goal Achievement,” *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 5(3), 329-334.

Mehr, Katie S., Jackie Silverman, Marissa A. Sharif, Alixandra Barasch, and Katherine L. Milkman, “The Motivating Power of Streaks: Increasing Persistence Is as Easy as 1, 2, 3,” revising for 4th-round review at *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

Mehr, Katie S. and Joshua Lewis, “The Role of Rating Credibility in Explaining Consumers’ Perceptions of Rater Disagreement,” reject and resubmit at the *Journal of Marketing Research*.

Park, Alexander B.*, **Katie S. Mehr***, and Amirreza Faghihinia[†], “When Do New Ratings Hurt (or Help) Product Evaluations?” under review.

Selected Research in Progress

Mehr, Katie S., Katherine L. Milkman, and Angela L. Duckworth, “Do Streaks Motivate Achievement?: A Field Experiment.”

Mehr, Katie S. and Joseph P. Simmons, “When and Why Do Consumers Provide Product Ratings?”

Mehr, Katie S. and Matt Meister, “How Do Consumers Perceive Ratings from Critics and Consumers?”

Conference Presentations

(includes only presentations that I delivered)

How Does Rating Specific Features of an Experience Alter Consumers’ Overall Evaluation of That Experience?

- Southern Ontario Behavioural Decision Research Conference, Toronto, Canada, 2024.
- Association for Consumer Research, Seattle, WA, 2023.
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Judgment and Decision Making preconference, Virtual, 2022. (flash talk)
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Virtual, 2021.
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Virtual, 2020. (poster)

Copy Paste Prompts: A New Nudge to Promote Goal Achievement.

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Montreal, Canada, 2019. (flash talk)

The Motivating Power of Streaks: Increasing Persistence Is as Easy As 1, 2, 3.

- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Virtual, 2020.
- Association for Consumer Research, Virtual, 2020.
- Society for Consumer Psychology, Huntington Beach, CA, 2020.
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Montreal, Canada, 2019. (poster)

The Role of Rating Credibility in Explaining Consumers’ Perceptions of Rater Disagreement.

- Behavioral Decision Research in Management Conference, Chicago, IL, 2024.
- Association for Consumer Research, Virtual, 2021.

Invited Talks

University of Alberta, Alberta School of Business (2022)
University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business (2022)
University of Houston, C.T. Bauer College of Business (2022)
University of Florida, Warrington College of Business (2022)

Awards, Honors, and Funding

University of Alberta SSHRC General Fund, 2023-2025
Wharton Risk Center Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship Award, 2019, 2020, 2021
Wharton Mack Institute for Innovation Management Doctoral Student Fellowship Award, 2021
Honorable Mention Poster Award, Society for Judgment and Decision Making, 2019
Henry Rutgers Scholar, 2018
Matthew Leydt Society, 2018
Phi Beta Kappa, 2017

Teaching Experience

Instructor

- Digital Marketing (Undergraduate, Winter 2024, University of Alberta)

Guest Lecturer

- Evaluating Evidence (Undergraduate, Spring 2022, University of Pennsylvania)

Teaching Assistant

- Managerial Decision Making (MBA, Spring 2022, Spring 2023, University of Pennsylvania)
- Negotiations (MBA, Spring 2021, University of Pennsylvania)
- Decision Processes (Undergraduate, Fall 2019, University of Pennsylvania)

Undergraduate Advising

- University of Pennsylvania College Achievement Program Graduate School Mentoring Initiative (Undergraduate, Spring 2021 - Spring 2022, University of Pennsylvania)
- Judgment and Decision Making Research Immersion (Undergraduate, Fall 2018 – Spring 2022, University of Pennsylvania)
- Senior Honors Thesis Advising (Undergraduate, Fall 2018 - Spring 2019, University of Pennsylvania)

Course Coordination

- Judgment and Decision Making Research Immersion (Undergraduate, Spring 2020 - Spring 2021, University of Pennsylvania)

Professional Service

- Member, Teaching and Learning Committee, University of Alberta
- Member, Petro-Canada Emerging Innovator Award Committee, University of Alberta
- Judge, University of Alberta Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities
- Reviewer, *Journal of Marketing Research*
- Reviewer, Society for Consumer Psychology
- Reviewer, Association for Consumer Research
- Mentor, Wharton Doctoral Council (2020-2022)

Professional Affiliations

Association for Consumer Research, Society for Consumer Psychology, Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Research Abstracts

Mehr, Katie S. and Joseph P. Simmons (2024), “How Does Rating Specific Features of an Experience Alter Consumers’ Overall Evaluation of That Experience?” *Journal of Consumer Research*, forthcoming.

How does the way companies elicit ratings from consumers affect the ratings that they receive? In 10 pre-registered experiments, we find that consumers rate subpar experiences more positively overall when they are also asked to rate specific aspects of those experiences (e.g., a restaurant’s food, service, and ambiance). Studies 1-4 established the basic effect across different scenarios and experiences. Study 5 found that the effect is limited to being asked to rate specific features of an experience, rather than providing open-ended comments about those features. Studies 6-9 provided evidence that the effect does not emerge because rating positive aspects of a subpar experience reminds consumers that their experiences had some good features. Rather, it emerges because consumers want to avoid incorporating negative information into both the overall and the attribute ratings. Lastly, study 10 found that asking consumers to rate attributes of a subpar experience reduces the predictive validity of their overall rating. We discuss implications of this work and reconcile it with conflicting findings in the literature.

Mehr, Katie S., Amanda E. Geiser, Katherine L. Milkman, and Angela L. Duckworth (2020), “Copy Paste Prompts: A New Nudge to Promote Goal Achievement,” *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 5(3), 329-334.

Consumers often struggle to achieve self-set, life-improving goals. We introduce a novel, psychologically wise nudge - the copy-paste prompt - that encourages consumers to seek out and mimic a goal-achievement strategy used by an acquaintance. In a large (N = 1,028) preregistered, longitudinal study, participants randomly assigned to receive a copy-paste prompt spend more time exercising the following week than participants assigned to either a quasi-yoked or simple control condition. The benefits of copy-paste prompts are mediated by the usefulness of the adopted exercise strategy, commitment to using it,

effort put into finding it, and the frequency of social interaction with people who exercise regularly. These findings suggest that further research on the potential of this virtually costless nudge is warranted.

Mehr, Katie S., Jackie Silverman, Marissa A. Sharif, Alixandra Barasch, and Katherine L. Milkman, “The Motivating Power of Streaks: Increasing Persistence Is as Easy as 1, 2, 3,” revising for 4th-round review at *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

Financial incentives are one of the most frequently used and effective tools for motivating employee persistence. We build on a growing literature showing that the efficacy of incentive schemes can be enhanced when insights from behavioral science are incorporated into their design. Specifically, we introduce and test the value of a psychologically-motivated incentive scheme: “streak incentives,” or rewards that offer people increasing payouts for completing multiple consecutive desired activities. We theorize that such incentives motivate persistence by increasing commitment to a goal of maximizing rewards. Across six pre-registered studies, we show that, contrary to standard economic models suggesting that people will opt into more task completion the larger the associated rewards, people actually opt into more work when compensated with streak incentives than when rewarded with larger, stable incentives. This effect is not driven by the increasing nature of streak incentives; rather, people’s goal commitment and motivation are boosted by the requirement that they complete work tasks consecutively to earn escalating payments. Taken together, our results suggest that designing incentives to encourage streaks of work is a low-cost way to increase goal commitment and therefore persistence in organizations and other contexts.

Mehr, Katie S. and Joshua Lewis, “The Role of Rating Credibility in Explaining Consumers’ Perceptions of Rater Disagreement,” reject and resubmit at the *Journal of Marketing Research*.

Do consumers prefer products on which raters agree (e.g., two 3-star ratings) or disagree (e.g., a 1-star and a 5-star rating)? Eight preregistered studies show that when there are few ratings, which are on average mediocre, consumers prefer products with rater disagreement (controlling for average rating). This effect occurs because rater disagreement affects consumers’ attributions. When raters agree, consumers find the ratings credible and attribute them to the product itself. Thus, consumers rely on those mediocre ratings to evaluate the product. But when the few raters disagree, consumers attribute those ratings to unreliable raters and assume the product conforms to their (typically high) expectations. Consistent with this mechanism, perceived rating credibility mediates the preference for products with rater disagreement (Study 5). There is further evidence that consumers assume that products about which raters disagree will conform to their prior expectations. First, consumers judge products whose raters disagree similarly to products without any ratings (Study 6). Second, manipulating expectations only affects consumers’ judgments of products whose raters disagree (Study 7). Lastly, the preference for products whose raters disagree reverses when there are many ratings (Study 8). With many ratings, consumers cannot attribute rater disagreement to a few, unreliable raters.

Park, Alexander B.*, Katie S. Mehr*, and Amirreza Faghihinia⁺, “When Do New Ratings Hurt (or Help) Product Evaluations?” under review.

Some online reviewers experience a product once and subsequently write a review (i.e., new rater). Others have multiple experiences with the same product (e.g., revisiting restaurants) and provide a new, updated rating for each experience (i.e., returning rater). This manuscript explores how viewing a new rating from a returning or new rater affects consumers' product perceptions across seven preregistered studies (N = 8,671). It establishes the returning rater penalty: when a returning rater adds a new, lower rating (e.g., 4 stars) after initially giving a high rating (e.g., 5 stars), consumers judge the product less favorably compared to if a new rater adds the lower rating. This is because consumers are more likely to infer that the quality of the product has changed if the new, lower rating is given by a returning (versus new) rater. Finally, four boundaries of the returning rater penalty are identified: 1) when the new rating indicates an improvement (vs. decline) in quality, 2) when inferences about quality change are controlled for via detailed written reviews, 3) when the new and initial ratings are the same, and 4) when both the new and initial ratings are categorically low (e.g., 1 or 2 stars).