

SHREYANS GOENKA

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Marketing (Consumer Behavior), 2020
Cornell University, S.C. Johnson Graduate School of Management

B.A. in Economics & Psychology, 2012
University of Pennsylvania, College of Arts & Sciences
Summa cum laude with Distinction in Psychology | Thesis Advisor - Paul Rozin

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

My research explores **Consumer Morality** – the influence of moral values on consumption preferences and economic patterns. I study how moral systems motivate divergent product preferences, economic behaviors, and patterns of welfare assistance. Other work explores how moral emotions (i.e., gratitude, compassion) influence attitudes and behaviors.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS (see Appendix for abstracts)

Goenka, Shreyans and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer (2019), “Charities can Increase the Effectiveness of Donation Appeals by Using a Morally Congruent Positive Emotion,” *Journal of Consumer Research*

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas (2019), “The Malleable Morality of Conspicuous Consumption,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

DISSERTATION

Committee: Manoj Thomas (chair), Stijn M.J. van Osselaer, Thomas Gilovich, Soo Kim

Morality Alters the Pursuit of Sensory and Social Pleasure

under review at Psychological Science

Social and religious leaders have decried sensory pleasures to be immoral and sought to suppress people’s pursuit of sensory pleasures. This research investigates how this moral suppression of sensory pleasures influences the consumption patterns in society. Utilizing the moral foundations theory, we propose that while the binding moral values reduce the desirability of sensory pleasures, they also increase the desirability of social pleasures. Thus, the moral suppression of sensory pleasures alters the type of goods consumed in a society. Analysis of a country-level archival dataset shows that countries that have a higher prevalence of binding moral values tend to have lower per-capita spending on products that provide sensory pleasures (e.g., alcohol, soda, cigarettes). However, these countries also tend to have higher per-capita spending on products that provide social pleasures (e.g., cosmetics, watches, jewelry). Three controlled laboratory studies replicate these findings and delineate the causal effect.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS (see Appendix for abstracts)

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “Morality Alters the Pursuit of Sensory and Social Pleasure,” *under review at Psychological Science*

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “Moral Objections to Accepting Welfare Benefits,” *data collection*

Goenka, Shreyans and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer, “Morality of Commercial Bodily Markets,” *data collection*

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “The Effects of Gratitude on Consumption Preferences,” *manuscript in preparation*

Goenka, Shreyans and Soo Kim, “Gratitude Minimizes Extreme Emotional Reactions to Positive or Negative Performance Feedback,” *manuscript in preparation*

Sirwani, Deepak, Shreyans Goenka and Manoj Thomas, “The Influence of Morality on Saving,” *data collection*

Ruby, Matthew, Shreyans Goenka, Priyamvada Dalmia, Paul Rozin, and April E. Fallon, “Body image dissatisfaction and its relation to self-esteem in Indian and American women,” *project based on my undergraduate dissertation*

HONORS/AWARDS

- Fellow, AMA-Sheth Doctoral Consortium, 2018
- Bartholomew Family Ph.D. Scholarship Award, 2017 & 2018
Award winner is chosen by department faculty based on Ph.D. research progress
- John P. Sabini Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research, 2012
Thesis completed under Dr. Paul Rozin
- Summa Cum Laude, University of Pennsylvania, 2012
- Psychology Department Honors, University of Pennsylvania, 2012
- Psi Chi Honor Society in Psychology, 2012
- Dean’s List, University of Pennsylvania, 2009-2011

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

** indicates presenter*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Manoj Thomas, “The Malleable Morality of Conspicuous Consumption,” *Society for Consumer Psychology, Savannah, February 2019*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer, “Comparing the Effects of Compassion vs. Gratitude on Prosocial Preferences,” *Society for Consumer Psychology, Savannah, February 2019*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Soo Kim, “How Gratitude Promotes Equanimity but Not Apathy,” *Society for Consumer Psychology Boutique Conference, New York City, June 2017*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Manoj Thomas, “How Gratitude Affects Preferences,” *Society for Consumer Psychology, San Francisco, February 2017*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Manoj Thomas, “How Gratitude Affects Preferences,” *Symposium on meaning and alienation in consumption, Munich, January 2017*

Goenka, Shreyans* and Manoj Thomas, “Assimilating Consummatory Behaviors & Contrasting Instrumental Behaviors,” *Society for Consumer Psychology, St. Pete’s Beach, February 2016*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Marketing Management, Fall 2017

Introductory course for undergraduates and non-MBA masters students

Course Rating 4.48/5.00; Instructor Rating 4.58/5.00

Teaching Assistant for Introductory MBA Marketing Course

Stijn van Osselaer and Soo Kim, Fall 2015, 2016

Stijn van Osselaer, Summer 2017

Soo Kim and Kaitlin Wooley, Fall 2017

SERVICE TO FIELD

Johnson Journal Club Coordinator, 2016-17

JCR Trainee Reviewer, 2016, 2017

Ad-hoc Conference Reviewer

Association for Consumer Research

Society for Consumer Psychology

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

- Senior Manager, Oriental Carbon & Chemical Ltd. 2008-2014
Family-Owned Business New Delhi, India
- Marketing Manager, DIVA Restaurants, 2013-2014
New Delhi, India
- Marketing Manager, Savory Restaurants, 2012-2013
Manhattan, NY

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Doctoral Program Coursework

Doctoral Proseminar, *Marketing Faculty*
 Behavioral Decision Research, *J. Edward Russo*
 The Self and Misbelief, *David Dunning*
 Goals, Needs, and Desires, *Melissa Ferguson*
 Advanced Social Psychology, *Dennis Regan*
 Social Cognition, *Katherine Kinzler*
 Quantitative Methods I, *Felix Thoemmes*
 Quantitative Methods II, *Felix Thoemmes*
 Statistical Methods, *Giles Hooker*

Undergraduate Coursework (Univ. of Pennsylvania)

Marketing (Wharton)

Introduction to Marketing, *Keith Niedermeier*
 Consumer Behavior, *Barbara Mellers*
 Principles of Retailing, *Stephen Hoch*
 Principles of Advertising, *J. Scott Armstrong*

Psychology

Introduction to Psychology, *Paul Rozin*
 Learning Models, *Robert Rescorla*
 Behavioral Economics, *Jason Dana*
 Evolutionary Psychology, *Robert Kurzban*
 Physiology of Motivated Behavior, *Harvey Grill*
 Judgments and Decisions, *Edward Royzman*
 Social Psychology, *Edward Royzman*
 Positive Psychology, *Kinjal Doshi*
 Multicultural Psychology, *Rahan Ali*
 Psychology Honors Seminar, *Sharon Thompson-Schill*

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX: SELECTED ABSTRACTS

Goenka, Shreyans and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer (2019), “Charities can Increase the Effectiveness of Donation Appeals by Using a Morally Congruent Positive Emotion,” *Journal of Consumer Research*

Prosocial organizations have different moral objectives. Some seek to promote welfare (e.g., Red Cross), but others seek to promote justice and equality (e.g., ACLU). Additionally, these organizations can induce different positive emotions to motivate donations. If organizations are seeking to promote different moral objectives using positive emotions, which positive emotion will be the most effective for their respective campaigns? We demonstrate how the congruency between the moral domain of an emotion and the moral objective of an organization plays a role in influencing prosocial behaviors. Charities that seek to increase care in society (e.g., disaster-relief charities) should utilize compassion in their promotion campaigns, but charities that seek to promote fairness and equality in society (e.g., human rights charities) should utilize gratitude in their promotion campaigns. One field study ($N = 2,112$) and four experiments ($N = 2,100$) demonstrate that utilizing a positive emotion congruent with the charity’s moral objective increases monetary donations and preferences. The preferences are driven by the moral concerns made salient by the respective emotions. Further, the preferences attenuate when exchange norms are made salient. Altogether, these results underscore the importance of considering moral congruence in consumption contexts.

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas (2019), “The Malleable Morality of Conspicuous Consumption,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

Conspicuous consumption has often been decried as immoral by many philosophers and scholars, yet it is ubiquitous and widely embraced. This research sheds light on the apparent paradox by proposing that the perceived morality of conspicuous consumption is malleable, contingent upon how different moral lenses highlight the different characteristics embedded in the behavior. Utilizing the Moral Foundations Theory, we demonstrate that the individualizing values (i.e., equality and welfare) make people focus on the self-enhancing characteristics of conspicuous consumption, making it seem morally objectionable. However, the binding values (i.e., deference to authority, in-group loyalty, and purity) make people focus on the social identity signaling characteristic of conspicuous consumption, making it seem morally permissible. First, an archival dataset shows that the prevalence of the different moral values predicts per-capita spending on luxury goods across different countries. Then, six studies ($N = 2903$) show that the trait endorsement and the momentary salience of the different moral foundations can influence the moral judgment of conspicuous consumption as well as the propensity to engage in conspicuous consumption. Further, analyses show that the effect of the binding values (individualizing values) is mediated by heightened sensitivity to the social identity signaling (self-enhancing) aspects of conspicuous consumption. Finally, the studies demonstrate that the effect is moderated by the extent of social visibility during consumption. Thus, this research suggests that some moral values can, somewhat paradoxically, increase conspicuous consumption.

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “Morality Alters the Pursuit of Sensory and Social Pleasure,” *under review at Psychological Science*

Social and religious leaders have decried sensory pleasures to be immoral and sought to suppress people’s pursuit of sensory pleasures. This research investigates how this moral suppression of sensory pleasures influences the consumption patterns in society. Utilizing the moral foundations theory, we propose that while the binding moral values reduce the desirability of sensory pleasures, they also increase the desirability of social pleasures. Thus, the moral suppression of sensory pleasures alters the type of goods consumed in a society. Analysis of a country-level archival dataset shows that countries that have a higher prevalence of binding moral values tend to have lower per-capita spending on products that provide sensory pleasures (e.g., alcohol, soda, cigarettes). However, these countries also tend to have higher per-capita spending on products that provide social pleasures (e.g., cosmetics, watches, jewelry). Three controlled laboratory studies replicate these findings and delineate the causal effect.

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “Moral Objections to Accepting Welfare Benefits,” *data collection*

Policymakers often attempt to increase enrollment in federal welfare programs by reducing the work requirement criteria. In this research, we argue that the effect of easing working requirements does not uniformly increase welfare enrollment. Individuals can hold moral objections to accepting ‘free-handout’ welfare, which impedes enrollment in welfare programs when working restrictions are eased. We draw from the Moral Foundations Theory to propose that the binding moral foundations emphasize the need-for-deservingness when accepting help. Thus, individuals who adhere to these foundations are less likely to accept the help that does not feel earned. Analysis of archival government data demonstrates that easing working restrictions in the SNAP welfare program did not increase enrollment in states with a higher prevalence of binding moral values. Further, controlled studies with samples of lower-income individuals replicate the findings, demonstrate causality, and delineate the mechanism. Hence, this research demonstrates that moral objections to accepting welfare can have important public policy implications.

Goenka, Shreyans and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer, “Morality of Commercial Bodily Markets,” *data collection*

People hold strong moral objections to the buying and selling of human body parts and bodily services (i.e., market exchange of blood, kidneys, sperm, prostitution, surrogacy, etc.). In this research, we demonstrate that the moral objections to these markets are not uniform, rather different groups deem these exchanges morally wrong for different reasons. Drawing from the Moral Foundations Theory, we show that liberals object to these markets as it violates the moral concerns of Harm/Fairness. That is, they believe these markets are exploitative and harmful to weaker members of society. However, conservatives object to these markets as it violates the moral concerns of Purity. That is, they believe these markets violate the sanctity of the human body. Consequently, liberals wish to punish the clients/buyers, but conservatives wish to punish the owner/seller. Concurrently, the two groups are willing to make different types of permissible exceptions for these markets. Finally, we show that the two groups require different persuasive messaging to shift public opinion in favor of legalization, contingent upon their different moral

objections. Hence, understanding these different moral objections produces public policy implications for law-makers designing regulations for these markets and also generate implications for advocacy groups working to legalize these markets.

Goenka, Shreyans and Manoj Thomas, “The Effects of Gratitude on Consumption Preferences,” *manuscript in preparation*

Although a positive state of mind is universally acknowledged as a fundamental human striving, different societies emphasize and value different types of positive emotions. In some societies, the pursuit of a general state of happiness is the norm; people are encouraged to undertake activities and engage in society to maximize their own happiness. However, in other societies, people are encouraged to practice gratitude, to be thankful for the social and economic instruments that facilitate a positive state of mind. How might these different social norms affect people’s preferences for economic goods? Results from five experiments ($N = 1657$) demonstrate that, relative to happiness, gratitude reduces the desire for hedonic goods but increases the desire for utilitarian goods. This is because gratitude engenders an instrumental mindset for evaluation of goods (“how useful is it”) that reduces the influence of consummatory evaluations (“how much will I enjoy this”) on preferences. However, because instrumental mindsets are contingent on one’s ability to derive utility from goods, this preference modification effect depends on the locus of control. Gratitude reduces preferences for hedonic goods only when people have an internal locus of control. This research not only helps distinguish the workings of gratitude from that of happiness but shows how the practice of gratitude can systematically change the economic activities in society.

Goenka, Shreyans and Soo Kim, “Gratitude Minimizes Extreme Emotional Reactions to Positive or Negative Performance Feedback,” *manuscript in preparation*

Managing one’s emotional fluctuations is a difficult task, particularly when one receives performance feedback. This research shows that practicing gratitude can reduce such emotional fluctuations, regardless of whether the feedback is a disappointing or a satisfying one. Four studies found that grateful individuals reacted with less extreme negativity to disappointing feedback and also with less extreme positivity to satisfying feedback. This emotional fluctuation minimizing (i.e., equanimity-promoting) effect was observed for current, past, and anticipated feedback and persisted even a few months after the feedback was received. Results also showed that the effects of gratitude were driven by enhanced feelings of self-complexity— a known antecedent of equanimity. Further, our studies rule out the alternative that such equanimity towards feedback results from apathy or reduced motivation. Potential benefits of implementing gratitude interventions in organizations are also discussed.