Special Session Summary  Consumers' Beliefs About Luck and Consequent Reactions to Lucky and Unlucky Situations

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**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

**Consumers’ Beliefs about Luck and Consequent Reactions to Lucky and Unlucky Situations**

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Luck describes the influence of chance on the situations we face in life. A lucky or unlucky event, then, arises randomly. Nevertheless, individuals' implicit beliefs about luck often violate this basic assumption. For example, gamblers may kiss a pair of dice before throwing them and athletes sometimes engage in strange rituals, such as wearing the same “game-shirt,” in an apparent attempt to improve their luck. Such anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some people believe, contrary to rationality, that luck represents something other than chance influences. Research verifies that people often are irrational in their interpretations of luck-related situations, and presents different conceptualizations of their views of luck’s influence (see Wagenaar, 1988).

Though the topic of luck has received scant attention from consumer behaviour researchers (McDaniel, 2002), it plays an important role in a number of purchasing situations. For example, shoppers might feel lucky or unlucky if they unexpectedly find or miss a favoured brand or a sale opportunity. And, more importantly, both retailers and manufacturers use luck-based promotional games and events to boost sales, and many marketers depend on such tactics as crucial parts of their promotional strategies (Feinman, Blashek, and McCabe, 1986).

Our session seeks to clarify the nature of consumers’ interpretations of lucky and unlucky events. Three papers present somewhat different conceptualizations of luck and explore the implications of these ideas for consumers’ behaviours. In particular, we will examine the consumer behaviour implications of conceptualizing luck as a negatively biased force (Ofir and Simonson), a consistent personal attribute that exerts a positive influence on expectations (Darke and Freedman), and a consideration for consumers’ self-expression (Briley and Price).