Roundtable Session : Understanding Prosocial Behavior Among Consumers and Organizations (Open to All)

Michal Strahilevitz, Golden Gate University USA

Participants:
David Mick, University of Virginia, USA
Deborah Small, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Carlos Torelli, University of Minnesota, USA
Kelly Goldsmith, Northwestern University, USA
Christopher Olivola, University College London, UK
Ekant Veer, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Wendy Liu, U.C. San Diego, USA
Andrew Kaikati, University of Georgia, USA
Susan Dobscha, Bentley College, USA
Michael Norton, Harvard Business School, USA
Nicole Verrochi, University of Pittsburgh, USA
Sankar Sen, Baruch College, USA
Sergio Carvalho, University of Manitoba, Canada
Karen Page Winterich, Pennsylvania State University, USA
Uri Simonsohn, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Aronte Bennett, Villanova University, USA
Andrea Scott, Pepperdine University, USA
Lalin Anik, Harvard Business School, USA
Jing Wang, University of Iowa, USA
Susan Harmon, Pacific Lutheran University, USA
Diane Martin, University of Portland, USA
Stefanie Rosen, University of South Carolina, USA
Zoë Chance, Harvard Business School, USA
Aditi Grover, Plymouth State University, USA
Shuili Du, Simmons School of Management, USA
Stacy Wood, North Carolina State, USA

This roundtable will encourage dialogue among diverse scholars interested in the causes and consequence of prosocial behavior among consumers and organizations. We will bring together researchers studying the psychology of giving and volunteerism, green consumerism, prosocial activities within organizations, and factors influencing consumer responses to different types of CSR.

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Roundtable
Understanding Prosocial Behavior Among Consumers and Organizations

Chair:
Michal Strailevitz, Golden Gate University, USA

Participants:
David Mick, University of Virginia, USA
Deborah Small, Wharton School of Business, USA
Carlos J. Torelli, University of Minnesota, USA
Andrew M. Kaikati, Terry College of Business, University of Georgia, USA
Kelly Goldsmith, Kellogg School, Northwestern University, USA
Michael Norton, Harvard School of Business, USA
Nicole Verrochi, University of Pittsburgh, USA
Sankar Sen, Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College/CUNY, USA
Sergio Carvalho, University of Manitoba, Canada
Karen Page Winterich, Pennsylvania State University, USA
Christopher Olivola, Cognitive, Perceptual and Brain Sciences, University College London, UK
Ekant Veer, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Susan Dohscha, Bentley University, USA
Uri Simonsohn, Wharton School of Business, USA
Wendy Liu, U.C. San Diego, USA
Stacy Wood, University of South Carolina, USA
Aronne Bennett, Villanova University, USA
Andrea Scott, Pepperdine University, USA
Jing (Alice) Wang, University of Iowa, USA
Lalit Anik, Harvard School of Business, USA
Shuili Du, Simmons College School of Management, USA
Stefanie Rosen, University of South Carolina, USA
Zoe Chance, Harvard School of Business, USA
Aditi Grover, Plymouth State University, USA
Susan Harmon, Pacific Lutheran University, USA
Diane Martin, University of Portland, USA

Extended Abstract

The interest in prosocial behavior has increased in the last few years as consumers seek greater meaning in their everyday lives. Many companies and consumers are paying attention to the impact their choices have on society at large, and an increasing number of consumer behavior scholars have begun to look at the causes and consequences of prosocial behavior among consumers and organizations. This roundtable will appeal broadly to those scholars interested in the factors influencing different types of prosocial behavior as well as the effects of different types of prosocial behavior on consumers' lives. Beyond this, it will also appeal to those interested in research examining the effects of prosocial behavior on the part of organizations and the effects of CSR on both employees and consumers. Our relatively large panel of committed attendees purposely includes scholars from a diverse mix of methodological backgrounds as well as a broad range of topics related to understanding the causes and effects of prosocial behavior. Researchers on our panel are doing research on many important subjects that fit under the "prosocial" umbrella. These include exploring factors affecting charitable giving and volunteerism, the effects of charitable behavior on consumer welfare and satisfaction, cause marketing, sustainability and green consumer behavior, how prosocial activities within organizations affect employee morale and job satisfaction, and the many factors influencing consumer responses to corporate social responsibility (including the type of CSR, the nature of the product, the nature of the consumer, the communication strategy, and prior CSR activities by the organization). Our panel includes scholars with diverse backgrounds and interests, so that we can learn from each other and foster a community that keeps the big picture in mind, rather than focusing on one type of research methodology or paradigm.

We aim to encourage dialogue before, during and after the roundtable. This will include identifying key areas of current research, discussing potential synergies between different streams of work, identifying directions for future research and discussing the challenges of doing research in this area. Due to the huge appeal of this topic to many scholars with diverse perspectives, we hope to not only attract a wide range of scholars from different backgrounds and interests, but also to help foster a community that will continue to be active even after ACR 2010 has passed. Due to the diverse backgrounds of those on our panel, this roundtable will be of interest to both qualitative and experimental researchers. The topics covered will be relevant to those interested in broadening our theoretical understanding of prosocial behavior, those dedicated to doing research with prosocial benefits (TCR), and those focused on managerial implications. Indeed, many on our panel are dedicated to doing research that addresses all three of these goals.

While many of our confirmed participants are impressive, we are particularly happy to have David Mick, who is considered by many to be the founder of the currently active Transformative Consumer Research community. In his ACR presidential address several years ago, Mick described transformative consumer research as “consumer research in the service of quality of life” (Mick 2006, p. 3). This roundtable will appeal to a large portion of the TCR community, but will also attract a range of scholars who are not (currently) part of the TCR group. One of the “big picture” questions we will address in our discussion is whether or not it is prosocial...
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to study prosocial behavior. Obviously, prosocial behavior is not always motivated by purely by altruistic motives. Indeed, researchers
our panel have demonstrated a connection between prosocial behavior and happiness (Liu and Aaker 2008; Dunn Aknin and Norton
2008), while others have identified the effectiveness of appealing to rather selfish status-seeking motives to encourage seemingly pro-
social behavior in certain contexts (Torelli, Monga, and Kaikati, 2010). More and more, nonprofits are focused not only on helping
the causes they support, but also on keeping their donors and volunteers feeling appreciated and happy, if not downright entertained
(Strahilevitz 2010). Still, understanding that prosocial behavior is not always motivated purely by a desire to help others can still help us
to encourage actions that benefit society. Given the importance and “bigness” of these topics, we will ask David Mick to briefly speak
on the potential value of doing research in this area, with a focus on work that is both rigorous in terms of theory, but also potentially
helpful in terms of service to society. We will also, as a group, briefly discuss strategies for promoting the value of research on prosocial
behavior within a business school setting.

Before and after the conference, continued dialogue will be facilitated via a combination of email exchanges (facilitated by the
roundtable chair), postings on the ACR Knowledge Exchange Forum, and postings on our newly created FaceBook group “Prosocial
Consumer Research.” The FaceBook group is open to any scholar interested in research in this area, but will begin with invitations to
the roundtable participants. In our pre-ACR dialogue, we will develop a plan for organizing breakout sessions focusing on issues such
as factors affecting consumer responses to CSR, causes and consequences of different types of prosocial behavior by consumers, the
prosocial nature of research on prosocial behavior, and the challenges that come with research in this area.

References
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