

Introduction

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When we began developing plans for this second edition of the *Cambridge Handbook*, the marketplace was substantially different. In the halcyon times before the explosion of COVID-19, our co-editor team discussed the importance of including chapters on the rapid pace of technological development, new forms of consumer interdependence, and the huge variance in (and concerns about) methodological practices across the field. As COVID extended its reach, these topics only grew in complexity and importance; moreover, our lives as consumers, researchers, and practitioners were forced into uncharted territory.

Not only did we need to re-evaluate classic topics in light of new realities, the stakes in doing so rigorously had ballooned. If we presented research that was not grounded in past knowledge, it would fail to be cumulative. And if we presented research that was not grounded in best scientific practices, it might be simply wrong, and, worse, undermine both researchers' and readers' confidence in consumer psychology's ability to address an ever-changing world.

Numerous journals and books have created repositories of knowledge specifically relevant to the pandemic; we did not re-orient the *Handbook* to focus specifically on this event. However, we did become even more committed to making sure that scholars interested in delving into both foundational and emerging areas in consumer psychology could do so armed with knowledge that might allow them to conceptualize and further our understanding in such challenging conditions.

To this end, the present handbook begins from the perspective of the individual consumer. Section 1 introduces chapters that offer critical elements of how the individual consumer navigates the consumptive world. Hussein and Tormala offer a perspective on attitudinal advocacy to help understand factors that lead consumers to become advocates for brands and their beliefs. Krause-Galoni and Mazzocco share with us the art of storytelling and persuasion; they elucidate why stories can be powerful persuasive devices as well as how stories shape consumer behavior more generally. Gamlin and Touré-Tillery provide insight into consumer goals and motivation to help us understand what drives us as human beings; they do so through both foundational and contemporary perspectives on goals and human motivation.

Next, Sussman, Wang, and Apalkova provide a thought-provoking discussion around consumer financial decision making; they reveal psychological

factors that permeate to influence our day-to-day decisions to save, borrow, and invest. Moving to the domain of morality, Lee and Winterich explore marketplace morality by helping the reader understand the moral decisions consumers make as well as the interplay between the morality of consumers and companies. Dubois and Jung explore luxury consumption and offer a triadic framework to understand how the luxury space is shaped by individual-level dynamics, firm-level decisions, and systematic forces.

Saint Clair takes us on a journey through consumer identity and reveals the fundamental relationship between our consumption choices and our identity. Building off the importance of identity, Mandel, Lisjak, and Wang discuss and explain how consumption can be used to assuage and ward off threats to our identity. Finally, Kim and Duhachek offer insight into the emergence of artificial intelligence within consumer psychology and the changes it has ushered forth.

We then devote Section 2 of the book to the consumer as embedded in the marketplace. Here, we see the profound influences that consumers – and their ideas – have on one another. Ferraro and McFerran highlight critical findings across the motivation, evaluation, consumption, and sharing phases in interpersonal influence, providing a rich summary of exemplar papers across the domain. Rucker and Galinsky explore how consumers use the marketplace to encode, decode, and recode their social rank; in effect, the marketplace serves as a powerful rank-signaling system among consumers. Ordabayeva, Çakanlar, and Fernandes broaden our lens to consider the potency of political ideology of consumer psychology, and Wu and Cutright take us into the question of religion and its effects on consumption.

Wein, Ghai, Lamberton, and Saldanha consider the ways that other consumers' and the environment's tendencies to affirm or deny dignity affect consumer behavior. We then learn from Liu and Kwon what it means to experience joint consumption – to share a single consumption experience – and from Maraj and Bardhi how our understanding of access-based consumption has evolved along with this form of acquisition and use. Lafreniere and Moore explore the importance of word-of-mouth, and finally, Veresiu presents us with the broadest form of embedded consumption in the marketplace – that related to culture. Here, the interested reader can gain a grounding in our understanding of the ways that large, often abstract forces in society can influence consumer behavior – and how consumer behavior, in turn, affects those forces.

Finally, Section 3 of the book is allocated to providing practical guidance to scholars and readers of consumer psychology research. Jung distinguishes among different forms of field experiments used in consumer research and reviews their recent growth in popularity. Goodman and Wright then address the use of online panel research, including the effects of shocks to panel composition and concerns regarding attention and data quality. For each of these chapters, the authors provide guidelines regarding best practices. To better understand how effects vary across studies, McShane and Böckenholt

present novel approaches to assess heterogeneity in meta-analyses. Shifting to naturalistic data collection from engagement with digital experiences, Kozinets presents an introduction to netnography, discussing the key stages in the research process and several recent applications. Finally, van Osselaer and Janiszewski take a critical look at the contrast between how consumer researchers conduct research and how they report it, presenting recommendations for integrating exploratory and confirmatory research and reporting it honestly.

In each section, our authors – who represent many of the leading lights in their respective domains – present analyses of past work as well as set an agenda for future research questions and explorations. As readers will find, these are not trivial questions, nor are they idle musings. Researchers who take these questions to heart can be assured of their importance, and they will also find in this same volume guidance in how they might best address them.

At the same time, readers may find that these questions are too knotty to take on alone. We hope that this handbook, while first offering a compendium of useful knowledge, also sparks connections between academic researchers across fields, between academic researchers and practitioners, and between inspired general readers who wish to contribute to the ongoing conversation and the researchers and practitioners working on the front lines of consumer psychology.

Finally, we look forward to the work done between this version of the *Handbook* and, ideally, the next. Enormous disruptions in the consumer landscape and the consumption experience, while forcing innovation, also serve to remind us of how much remains to be learned about the apparent fundamentals of our field. As Charles Sanders Peirce wrote, “Notwithstanding all that has been discovered since Newton’s time, his saying that we are little children picking up pretty pebbles on the beach while the whole ocean lies before us unexplored remains substantially as true as ever, and will do so though we shovel up the pebbles by steam shovels and carry them off in carloads.”

We hope that you find this collection of pebbles, boulders, and samples of the ocean worthy of collection, and that, most importantly, they inspire your own future contributions.

