AKSHINA BANERJEE

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EMPLOYMENT

University of Michigan, Ross School of Business   **July, 2023-Present**

Position: Assistant Professor of Marketing

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago, Booth School of Business   **Graduation**: June, 2023

PhD Department: Behavioral Marketing

The University of Minnesota - Twin Cities   **Graduation**: May, 2017

Majors: Economics, B.S. (summa cum laude); Linguistics, B.A. (summa cum laude).
Minor: Mathematics; **CGPA**: 3.98

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Theoretical: The role of language in consumer decisions; Information processing and comprehension

Methodological: Experimental methods; Natural language processing; Secondary data analysis; Descriptive modeling and machine learning

PUBLICATIONS

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O. (2022). "What you are getting and what you will be getting: Testing whether verb tense affects intertemporal choices." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. 2022.

(Data publicly available here)

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"The Language That Drives Engagement: A Systematic Large-scale Analysis of Headline Experiments." *Marketing Science.* 2024.

(Materials available here)

PAPERS UNDER REVISION/REVIEW

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"<u>Associations with the Incomprehensible: Foreign Language Increases Authenticity Perceptions and Preferences .</u>" Invited second round revision at *Journal of Consumer Psychology.*

Banerjee, A., & Rocklage, M., Mosleh, M., Rand, D. "<u>Confident judgments of (mis)information veracity are more, rather than less, accurate.</u>" Invited revision at *PNAS Nexus*

WORKING PAPERS/ IN PROGRESS

Chaudhry, S., **Banerjee, A.**, Wu, L., Lupoli, M., "Making amends with the audience: Manager use of public apologies and other amends-making strategies."

Banerjee, A., Rocklage, M., Mosleh, M., Rand, D. "Confident Language in Misinformation." (In Preparation for *PNAS*)

Banerjee, A*., & Winet, Y*. , "Asymmetric Variety Seeking in Hierarchical Choices." (In Preparation for *JCR*)
 Recipient of the Thaler-Tversky Grant 2020
 Recipient of the PhD Program Grant 2021

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"Does Big-Data Correlational Analysis Predict Causal Effects of Language on Decisions?" (In Preparation for *Science*)

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O., "Heterogeneity in Reader Engagement: Analyzing the Impact of Language-Based Constructs Across Multiple News Types.**"** (In Preparation for *Nature*)

Banerjee, A., Chen, S., Urminsky, O.,"Choosing Oleander Over Zanthoxylum" (In Preparation for *JMR*)
*denotes equal contribution

ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED PAPERS

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"<u>The Language That Drives Engagement: A Systematic Large-scale Analysis of Headline Experiments</u>." Available Online at *Marketing Science*. 2024

We use a large-scale data set of thousands of field experiments conducted on <u>Upworthy.com</u>, an online media platform, to investigate the cognitive, motivational, affective, and grammatical factors implementable in messages that increase engagement with online content. We map from textual cues measured with text-analysis tools to constructs implied to be relevant by a broad range of prior research literatures. We validate the constructs with human judgment and then test which constructs causally impact click-through to articles when implemented in headlines. Our findings suggest that the use of textual cues identified in previous research and industry advice does impact the effectiveness of headlines overall, but the prior research and industry advice does not always provide useful guidance as to the direction of the effects. We identify which textual characteristics make headlines most effective at motivating engagement in our online news setting.

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O. (2022). "What you are getting and what you will be getting: Testing whether verb tense affects intertemporal choices." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. 2022.

Prior research has shown that the way information is communicated can impact decisions, consistent with some forms of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language shapes thought. In particular, language structure—specifically the form of verb tense in that language—can predict savings behaviors among speakers of different languages. We test the causal effect of language structure encountered during financial decision-making, by manipulating the verb tense (within a single language) used to communicate intertemporal tradeoffs. We find that verb tense can significantly shift choices between options, owing to tense-based inferences about timing. However, the spontaneous use of verb tense when making choices occurs only in the complete absence of other timing cues and is eliminated if even ambiguous or nondiagnostic time cues are present, although prompted timing inferences persist. We test between multiple competing accounts for how verb tense differentially impacts timing inferences and choices. We find evidence for a cue-based account, such that the presence of other cues blocks the spontaneous use of verb tense in making intertemporal decisions, consistent with the "Good Enough" proposal in psycholinguistics.

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"Associations with the Incomprehensible: Foreign Language Increases Authenticity Perceptions and Preferences ." Invited second round at *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

Language is pervasive and hence a common factor in people's decision making. Prior research has mostly studied the effects of comprehensible language, language that communicates a literal meaning to consumers – on behavior and attitudes. In this paper, we investigate the potential for language that is incomprehensible to a given consumer to nevertheless impact willingness to pay and choice. In particular, we propose that potentially meaningful incomprehensible language can convey associations beyond literal meaning. Using the domain of foreign language, we demonstrate that adding text in an foreign language unreadable to the consumer to a known native language in the description of foreign food significantly increases perceptions of authenticity, uniqueness, and quality, resulting in higher valuations and greater likelihood of choice, while holding the country of origin constant. Thus, we show that an incomprehensible cue creates consumer value by instilling feelings of intangible experiences and that those feelings impact decisions. We test our framework using secondary field data as well as experiments, including with consequential choices.

Banerjee, A., & Rocklage, M., Mosleh, M., Rand, D. "Confident judgments of (mis)information veracity are more, rather than less, accurate." Invited revision at *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Nexus.*

Confidence is increasingly viewed as a barrier to recognizing misinformation, as people who are more confident tend to be more likely to believe and share false news. Here, we challenge this view by distinguishing between two types of confidence: general confidence in one's abilities, and specific confidence in a particular judgment. Using a large, pre-registered study in which participants judge the accuracy of news posts, we demonstrate a striking dissociation between these two forms of confidence. While higher general confidence is associated with worse discernment of true versus false headlines (in line with past work), we find that higher confidence in specific judgments is associated with better truth discernment - a finding that we observe among both Democrats and Republicans. These results call for a reevaluation of the role of confidence in the detection of misinformation. Focusing on confidence in specific judgments, rather than general abilities, could play an important role in helping to mitigate belief in misinformation.

Chaudhry, S., **Banerjee, A**., Wu, L., Lupoli, M. "Making amends with the audience: Manager use of public apologies and other amends-making strategies."

What are the building blocks of satisfactory public responses to customer complaints? This project investigates key components for satisfactory public responses to customer complaints using hotel manager responses on TripAdvisor. Managers effectively engage in public relations as third-party observers assess these responses to make lodging decisions. MTurkers code amends-making elements, response satisfaction and future interest in visiting the hotel. We analyze data to pinpoint influential components, highlighting the pivotal role of the "offer of repair" subcomponent in predicting satisfaction. NLP tools further break down language features for managerial guidance.

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O.,"Does Big-Data Correlational Analysis Predict Causal Effects of Language on Decisions?" (In Preparation for *Science*)

A substantial research literature has used large-scale correlational text analysis to determine how characteristics of language encountered by people predicts (and presumably causes) their subsequent behavior, such as online engagement or donation decisions. These approaches have high external validity, by analyzing large-scale real-world data and behavior, but are causal interpretations of the findings internally valid? Using a novel large-scale dataset containing thousands of headline experiments, we compare the results of correlational analyses (excluding the experimental variation) with causal analyses (solely using experimental variation) to test what factors increase the likelihood of click-through in an online news setting. We find that not only does experimental data provide higher statistical power, but the correlational findings differ in magnitude, and sometimes even in direction, from the causal findings. Our results suggest that big-data correlational analyses may provide poor predictions of causal effects, underscoring the need for marketers to conduct experiments.

Banerjee, A., & Urminsky, O., "Heterogeneity in Reader Engagement: Analyzing the Impact of Language-Based Constructs Across Multiple News Types." (In Preparation for *Nature*)

We explore the heterogeneity in how language-based constructs impact online news engagement across different platforms. Leveraging a large-scale dataset from ChartBeat, we analyze over 68,000 experiments across 416 news sites, revealing significant heterogeneity in the effects of language constructs on click-through rates. Our findings challenge the generalizability of existing psychological theories to real-world settings, highlighting the need for a more nuanced approach in behavioral research. We emphasize the importance of considering domain-specific characteristics and contextual factors to better understand and predict online user behavior.

Banerjee, A.*, & Winet, Y.* , "Asymmetric Variety Seeking in Hierarchical Choices." (In Preparation for *JCR*)

People frequently seek variety when choosing hedonic experiences for themselves (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Ratner, Kahn & Kahneman, 1999; Simonson, 1990). They also face multiple choices that contain other choices. This research explores how the structure of decision-making hierarchies impacts consumer variety-seeking behavior. When making hierarchical choices—such as selecting a restaurant before choosing a specific dish — consumers tend to seek more variety at higher levels (e.g., restaurant) compared to lower levels (e.g., dish). This effect occurs in a variety of domains, in a consequential decision, and with both familiar and unfamiliar option sets. We also rule out alternative explanations, showing this effect cannot be explained by a sequence effect or a desire to have a prototypical experience. This work builds on extant work on choice architecture showing how understanding the impact of small changes in the structure of decisions can push consumers to make better decisions, which has important implications for improving consumer well-being.

PRESENTATIONS

"The Language That Drives Engagement: A Systematic Large-scale Analysis of Headline Experiments"
- Haring Symposium, Kelley School of Business, April 2021.
- Association of Consumer Research, Virtual, October 2021.
- Marketing Science Conference, Virtual, June 2022.
- Association of Consumer Research (revised version), October 2023.
- Society for Consumer Psychology, March 2024
- Behavioral Decision Research in Management, June 2024

"What You Are Getting and What You Will Be Getting: Testing Whether Verb Tense Affects Intertemporal Choices"
- Association of Consumer Research, October 2017.
- Cognitive Science Conference (poster), June, 2018
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making (poster), November, 2018.

"Associations with the Incomprehensible: Foreign Language Increases Authenticity Perceptions and Preferences"
- Society for Consumer Psychology, March 2020.
- Association of Consumer Research, October 2021.

"Asymmetric Variety Seeking in Hierarchical Choice"
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making (poster), February 2022
- Association of Consumer Research (poster), October 2021 (presented by co-author), September 2024 (presented by co-author)

"Making amends with the audience: Manager use of public apologies and other amends-making strategies."
- Association of Consumer Research (poster), February 2022 (presented by co-author).
- Academy of Management, August 2023.

"Does Big-Data Correlational Analysis Predict Causal Effects of Language on Decisions?"
- Association of Consumer Research, October 2023.

"Heterogeneity in Reader Engagement: Analyzing the Impact of Language-Based Constructs Across Multiple News Types."
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, November 2024.
- Society for Consumer Psychology, February 2025.
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology, February 2025.
- Seminar talk at Yale SOM, April 2025.

"Choosing Oleander Over Zanthoxylum."
- Association of Consumer Research, September 2024 (presented by co-author).
- Society for Consumer Psychology, February 2025.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

"Marketing Core" (Undergraduate)
- Faculty Instructor, Winter 2024, Winter 2025

"Consumer Behavior" (MBA)
- Teaching Assistant for Daniel Bartels and Celia Gaertig, Winter 2018; Winter 2019; Autumn 2019; Winter 2020; Winter 2021; Spring 2021; Summer 2021; Winter 2022.

"Experimental Marketing" (MBA)
- Teaching Assistant for Oleg Urminsky, Spring 2019; Spring 2020; Summer 2020; Winter 2021; Summer 2021; Winter 2022.

"Data-Driven Marketing" (MBA)
- Teaching Assistant for Günter Hitsch, Spring 2020; Spring 2021; Summer 2021; Spring 2022.

GRANTS & NOMINATIONS

- AMA-Sheth Doctoral Symposium Fellow, University of Texas-Austin, 2022

- Haring Symposium Fellow, Kelley School of Business at Indiana University-Bloomington, 2021

- Recipient of the PhD Program Grant 2021 for $4500

- Recipient of the Thaler-Tversky Grant 2020 for $3000

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Journal of Consumer Research (JCR), reviewer, Jan., 2024; Feb. 2025

Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP), reviewer, June, 2024; Sept., 2024; Dec. 2024; Feb 2025; March 2025; May 2025

Cognition, reviewer, June 2024

Management Science, reviewer, Feb. 2025

Journal of Association of Consumer Research (JACR), reviewer, Feb. 2025

For the latest version of any paper, or the CV, please visit my website: akshinabanerjee.com