

Nikkita Sarna

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Marketing [Concentration in Consumer Behavior]

May 2023 (expected)

The University of Texas at Austin, McCombs School of Business

Bachelor of Science, Marketing

May 2014

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology

University of Maryland, College Park

Semester Abroad: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

July 2013

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Research Areas: Joint Consumption, Sharing, Social Decision-Making, Fairness, and Interpersonal Comparisons

Research Methodologies: Experimental design, Text analysis, Data scraping (Twitter; Reddit)

WORKING PAPERS

Sarna, Nikkita and Andrew D. Gershoff, “Choosing for Joint Consumption: How Avoiding Appearing Selfish Can Be Worse for Everyone”, working paper.

- This research examines how people make decisions for shared experiences with others. Specifically, we study how consumers occasionally choose suboptimal options due to a focus on relative versus absolute utility.

Sarna, Nikkita and Susan M. Broniarczyk, “Guilty Pleasures: Consumers Choosing Identity Conflicting Behaviors,” working paper

- This research examines how consumers choose to engage in behaviors that differ from both their own typical behaviors and from what similar others consume. We use the context of guilty pleasures to study the motivations for consuming identity inconsistent products.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Science of Attractive Language with James W. Pennebaker

- We use text datasets from Yelp, Ted Talks and Reddit to understand what language characteristics predict greatest consumer engagement.

Collaborative Consumption with Susan Broniarczyk and Andrew Gershoff

- This research examines a variety of motivations for lending and borrowing products to known others.

Post-Pandemic Identity Change with Susan Broniarczyk and Morgan Ward

- Using longitudinal data we collected throughout multiples stages of the pandemic, we examine how consumers perceive change and whether they are open to having changed or prefer reverting back to their old self.

Evaluations of Loyalty Programs and Preferential Treatment with Andrew Gershoff

- This research examines how consumers react to observing others obtain preferential treatment, through loyalty programs, and whether the type of loyalty program can discourage non-loyal customers.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (* denotes presenting author)

Nikkita Sarna *, Andrew D. Gershoff (2022, April). “Choosing for Joint Consumption: How Avoiding Appearing Selfish Can Be Worse for Everyone”. Paper presented at *39th Annual Doctoral Symposium*. Houston, TX.

Nikkita Sarna *, Andrew D. Gershoff (2021, October). “Choosing for Joint Consumption: How Avoiding Appearing Selfish Can Be Worse for Everyone”. Paper presented at *New Beginnings Symposium*. College Station, TX.

Nikkita Sarna*, Andrew D. Gershoff (2021, October). “Choosing for Joint Consumption: How Avoiding Appearing Selfish Can Be Worse for Everyone”. Poster presented at *Association for Consumer Research*. Virtual.

Nikkita Sarna*, Susan M. Broniarczyk (2020, October). “Guilty Pleasures: Consumers Choosing Identity Conflicting Behaviors”. Poster presented at *Association for Consumer Research*. Virtual.

Nikkita Sarna*, Susan M. Broniarczyk (2019, August). “Guilty Pleasures: What’s the Harm?.” Poster presented at *Society for Consumer Psychology Boutique Conference: Addiction & Maladaptive Consumption*. Seattle, WA

- Won Best Poster Award

Chaunetta Jones*, Maria Roditis*, Cameron Wimpy, Nikkita Sarna, Sarah Evans, Caitlin Moynihan (2018). “Encouraging Quitting at the Point-of-Sale: Using Multi-Phased Qualitative and Quantitative Research to Develop Effective Advertisements for FDA’s *Every Try Counts* Campaign”. Presented at the *American Public Health Association*. San Diego, CA.

Maria Roditis*, Nasi Dineva, Matthew Walker, Caitlin Moynihan, Nikkita Sarna, Shay Abagat (2018). “Understanding Smokeless Tobacco Use within the Rural Cultural Values System In-depth Interviews with Male Youth”. Presented at the *National Summit on Smokeless Tobacco Prevention*. Sacramento, CA.

Sarah Evans*, Cameron Wimpy, Ashley Barbee, Nikkita Sarna (2015). Framing Public Health Policy and Behavior: Smokeless Tobacco and Major League Baseball. Poster presented at *American Public Health Association*. Chicago, IL.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Graduate Continuing Fellowship, Spring 2022—2023

- Awarded to top graduate students university-wide

Eugene and Dora Bonham Memorial Fund (2020, 2021)

McCombs School of Business PhD Spirit Award (2021)

McCombs School of Business Recruitment Fellowship (2018, 2019)

Research Competition Winner at the Association for Consumer Research Conference, *Fall 2019*

Best Poster at the Society for Consumer Psychology Addiction & Maladaptive Consumption Conference, *Summer 2019*

Fors Marsh Group Core Value Award, *Winter 2016*

- Selected by Managing Director based on client management skills

Fors Marsh Group Employee Achievement Award, *Fall 2015*

- Selected by Managing Director based on performance

Top 10 Outstanding Psychology Student Award (Faculty Nominated), *Spring 2014*

Dean’s List Academic Honors (Five Semesters)

Top Five Strategic Business Plan (Faculty Selected) - Melbourne, Australia, *Spring 2013*

Accepted into College Park Scholars: Media Self & Society Two-Year Program, *Fall 2010-Spring 2012*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

R, Stata, Microsoft Excel, Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), NVivo, Python (Beginner)

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Fors Marsh Group

Aug. 2014—Aug. 2018

Communication Researcher, Project Lead

- Led the research effort to inform the creation of a nation-wide media campaign for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), motivating cigarette smokers toward tobacco cessation (“*Every Try Counts Campaign*”; Website: EveryTryCounts.gov)
 - Research Plan: Designed a four stage multi-year long mixed method research plan to gain insights about the target market and test concept strategies and executions.
 - Formative Research (Qualitative): To understand motivation and barriers of quitting, developed discussion guides and hosted nation-wide focus groups and in-depth interviews with cessation counselors.
 - Concept Testing (Quantitative): Developed surveys (including a pre-post exposure design) to learn reactions to campaign materials. Managed analysis team to analyze data from over 2,000 individuals and provide campaign strategy recommendations based on results.
 - Project Management: Served as project lead of multi-year project. In charge of client management, survey development, data analysis, senior client presentations, and report development.
- Led the research effort to provide recommendations for communicating smokeless tobacco health risks to rural teenagers (“*The Real Cost Campaign*”)
 - Research Plan: Designed the research plan and recruitment plan to run in-depth interviews and focus groups inside 16 different rural public schools across the nation.
 - Qualitative Research: Developed discussion guides, conducted moderator trainings, created analysis plans, and managed final analysis and reporting with a team of four researchers.
 - Executive Presentations: Created PowerPoint decks to easily visualize results and presented findings to FCB New York advertising executives and FDA health scientists.
- Conducted advanced quantitative analyses (e.g., odds ratios for belief analysis) on large datasets of 2,000—7,000 respondents by writing syntax in Stata for projects with the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Defense, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- Hosted company-wide trainings on how to use an iterative mixed methods research approach to answer research questions.

Summer Intern, Red Head Advertising and Marketing Company, Ellicott City, MD

May 2012—Sept. 2012

Marketing Promotions Intern, Maryland Sports Marketing, College Park, MD

Apr. 2011—May 2012

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Principles of Marketing (Spring 2021)

Instructor Rating: 4.7/5

Total Enrollment: 43 Students

Teaching Assistance

MBA Marketing Management (Fall 2021)

MBA Strategic Branding (Spring 2020)

Data Analytics for Marketing (Fall 2019)

Sales Strategy (Spring 2019)

Principles of Marketing (Fall 2018, Fall 2020)

Guest Lecturer for Principles of Marketing Classes

Ethics in Marketing (Fall 2021; Fall 2020)

Marketing Research for Public Health (Spring 2020, Spring 2022)

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Methodology

Text Analysis and Social Media, James Pennebaker

Marketing Research Methods, Leigh McAlister

Linear Models and ANOVA, Greg Hixon

Advanced Applied Statistic I, Greg Hixon

Advanced Applied Statistics II, Greg Hixon

Marketing Models, Ty Henderson

Data Driven Marketing MBA (Audit), Jason Duan

Conceptual Learning

Behavioral Decision Research, Raj Raghunathan

Marketing Management and Strategy, Raji Srinivasan

Biological Basis of Behavior, Jessica O'Bleness

Buyer Behavior, Susan Broniarczyk

Theory and Explanation in Psychology, Bertram Gawronski

Foundations of Social Psychology, William Swann

Interpersonal Communication Theory, Rene Dailey

SERVICE

Working Paper Reviewer, Association for Consumer Research (2021)

Working Paper Reviewer, Society for Consumer Psychology (2021)

Judge, Startup Simulation Competition for Asian Business Student Association (2020)

Marketing Department Representative, McCombs Career Panel (2021, 2022)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP)

Association for Consumer Research (ACR)

Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

American Marketing Association (AMA)

American Advertising Federation (AAF)