Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

4th NIMCon

NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting 2025

September 21-23, 2025

NIMCon – An interdisciplinary conference on consumer behavior and consumer decisions

The NIMCon is an interdisciplinary conference on topics related to consumer behavior and consumer decisions. Researchers from universities and other research institutions come together to discuss the latest findings from (behavioral) economics, psychology, marketing, management, data science, artificial intelligence, and business informatics.

This year's program explores how consumers make choices in a rapidly changing world. Talks dive into the drivers and barriers of sustainable behavior, from upcycling and food citizenship to overcoming biases in sustainable travel planning. Additionally, sessions on AI and digital technologies examine how generative AI, algorithmic systems, and AI-assisted decisions shape what we search for, prefer, and, ultimately choose. Beyond technology and sustainability, the program highlights insights into persuasion, risk perception, and the social dynamics of decision-making — from gamification and ASMR to the impact of negative interactions online. Together, these sessions offer a multi-faceted view of how individual decisions influence markets, businesses, and society.

About the Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

The Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions (NIM) is a non-profit institute at the intersection between science and industry. NIM examines how consumer decisions change due to new technological and social trends or the application of behavioral science, and what the resulting micro- and macroeconomic impacts are for the market and for society as a whole. A better understanding of consumer decisions and their impacts helps society, businesses, politics, and consumers make better decisions with regard to "prosperity for all" in the sense of the social-ecological market system.

The Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions is the founder of GfK.

NIMCon 2025

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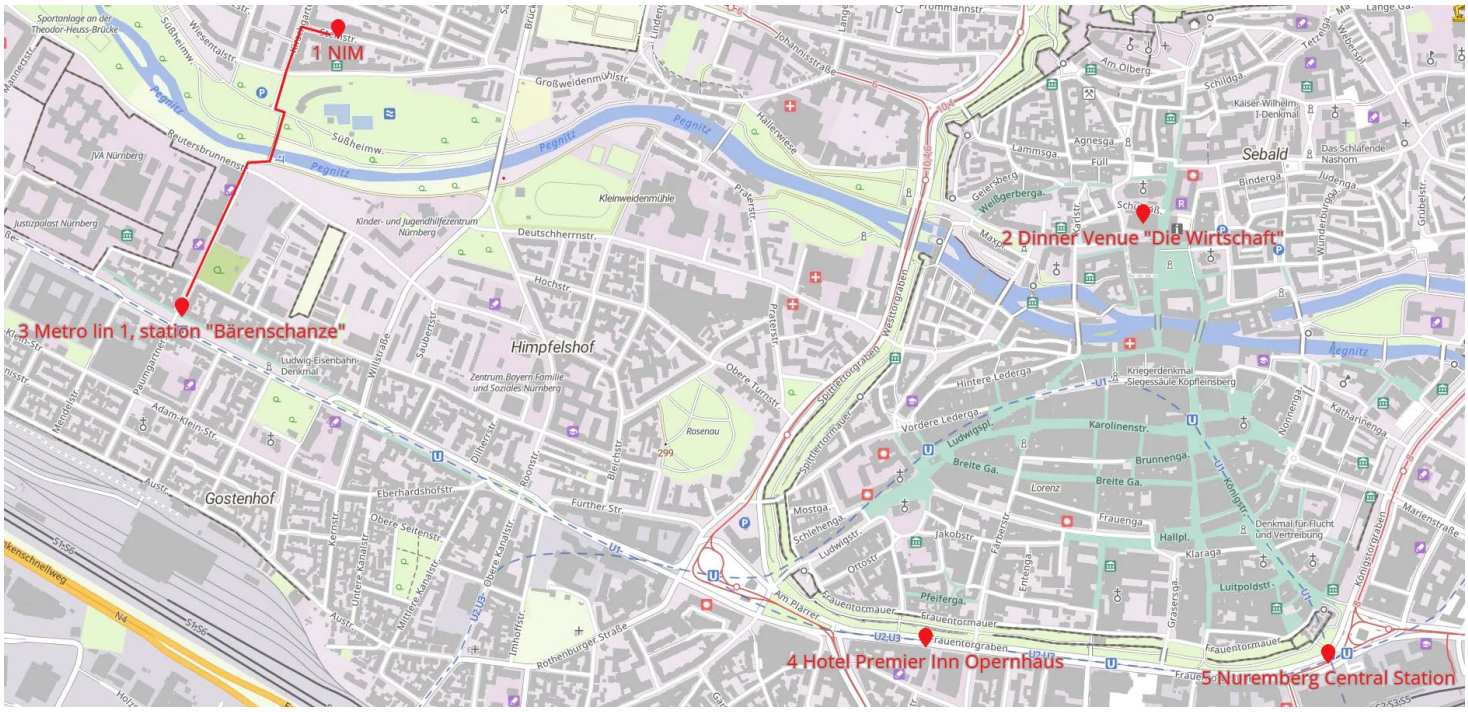
NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting

LOCATIONS



1. Nürnberg Institut für Marktentscheidungen e.V. | Steinstraße 21, Entrance B, 5th floor
   Conference and Welcome Reception
   900 m from metro line 1, station “Bärenschanze”
2. Die Wirtschaft | Waaggasse 2-6
   Dinner
   1800 m from conference venue
3. Metro line 1, station “Bärenschanze”
4. Hotel Premier Inn Nuremberg City Opernhaus | Frauentorgraben 53
5. Nuremberg Central Station and Cloud One Hotel

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PROGRAM

Sunday, 21. September

17:00		Informal Opening at NIM | Steinstr. 21

Monday, 22. September

09:30 - 10:00	Matthias Unfried	Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:00 - 10:30	Carolin Kaiser	The Changing Face of Product Search: Consumer Behavior with Generative AI vs. Traditional Engines
10:30 - 11:00	Benedikt Morschheuser	Reassessing User Typologies in Gamification: Empirical Insights and Practical Implications for Tailored Motivational Design
11:00 – 11:30		Coffee Break
11:30 – 12:00	Monika Imschloß	Transforming my Trash into Treasure: Why Consumers Value Personalized Upcycling
12:00 – 12:30	Birgit Stoltenberg	From Niche to Mainstream? Exemplary Activism as a Driver of Food Citizenship and Sustainable Transformation in Food Systems.
12:30 – 13:00	Verena Tiefenbeck	Greener or faster? Overcoming cognitive biases in travel planning
13:00 – 14:00		Lunch
14:00 – 14:30	Timo Schreiner	Me or We? How Self- vs. Other-Benefit Marketing Appeals Resonate with Different Consumer Types
14:30 – 15:00	Corinna Hempel	What keeps price-sensitive consumers from shopping sustainably—is it really just the price?
15:00 – 15:30	Florian Gasser	The Sound of Persuasion: ASMR's Role in Consumer Perception and Purchase Intent
15:30 – 16:00		Coffee Break
16:00 – 16:30	Marcus Schögel	Artificial Intelligence in the Customer Journey: Sweet, hot and white spots. A preliminary analysis from a holistic perspective
16:30 – 17:00	Benedikt Mangold	Toxic Talk: Quantifying the Impact of Negative Behavior in Multi-Agent Decision Making
17:00 – 17:45	Impulse by Peter Bofinger and Plenary Discussion	Multicrisis and Consumption
18:30		Conference Dinner

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Tuesday, 23. September

10:00 - 11:00	NIM-FAU PhD-Grants	
	Celine Fleischmann/ Moritz Engelhardt	SOMA – Somatosensory Optimization of Multisensory Advertising
	Laura Schneider	Human Metacognition in AI-Assisted Decision-Making
	Xhovana Prenga	Social Media Algorithmic Sensemaking
11:00 – 11:30	Vladimir Manewitsch	Understanding Consumer Preferences for AI- and Human-Authored Books: An Explanatory Experimental Study
11:30 – 12:00		Coffee Break
12:00 – 12:30	Sebastian Goerg	Order Effects in Eliciting Preferences
12:30 – 13:00	Benjamin Scheibehenne	The Cognitive Processes Underlying Risk Perception
13:00 – 13:30	Petra Nieken	The Gender of Opportunity
13:30		Wrap-up and Farewell (with small Lunch)

Contact

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ABSTRACTS

Florian Gasser
Züricher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften / University of St. Gallen

The Sound of Persuasion: ASMR's Role in Consumer Perception and Purchase Intent

In recent years, influencers in the field of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) have emerged as a global media phenomenon, yet systematic research on their marketing potential remains scarce. This presentation first outlines the current state of ASMR scholarship, emphasizing its conceptual links to parasocial interaction (PSI) theory and consumer behavior research. It then introduces findings from an experimental study comparing the effects of ASMR-based sponsored messages with those of conventional influencer marketing. Across two 2×2 experiments (N=408), exposure to ASMR triggers in short sponsored videos significantly increased perceived ASMR and PSI, which in turn enhanced brand evaluation and purchase intention. These effects were fully mediated, underscoring that ASMR's persuasive potential lies in fostering intimacy and trust between communicator and audience. The results suggest that ASMRtists represent a distinct and valuable category of brand ambassador, particularly for products that can be integrated into multisensory and affective marketing contexts.

Sebastian Goerg
Technical University of Munich

Order Effects in Eliciting Preferences

Having an accurate account of preferences help governments design better policies for their citizens, organizations develop more efficient incentive schemes for their employees and adjust their product to better suit their clients' needs. The plethora of elicitation methods most commonly used can be broadly distinguished between methods that rely on people self-assessing and directly stating their preferences (qualitative) and methods that are indirectly inferring such preferences through choices in some task (quantitative). Alarmingly, the two approaches produce systematically different conclusions about preferences and, therefore, survey designers often include both quantitative and qualitative items. An important methodological question that is hitherto unaddressed is whether the order in which quantitative and qualitative items are encountered affects elicited preferences. We conduct four, pre-registered, studies with more than 3,000 participants, where we elicit preferences about risk, time-discounting and altruism in variations of two conditions: 'Quantitative First' and 'Qualitative First'. We find significant and systematic order effects. Eliciting preferences through qualitative items first boosts inferred patience and altruism while using quantitative items first increases the cross-method correlation for risk and time preferences. We explore how monetary incentivization and introducing financial context modulates these results and discuss the implications of our findings in the context of nudging interventions as well as our understanding of the nature of preferences.

Corinna Hempel
Albstadt-Sigmaringen University

What keeps price-sensitive consumers from shopping sustainably—is it really just the price?

Given the increasing challenges on a global scale due to consumption and the constantly evolving needs of consumers, it is crucial to comprehend the factors driving consumer food choices in the face of external pressures. Utilizing the food value scale developed by Lusk and Briggeman (2009) to measure these drivers, we conducted a cross-country survey involving 2000 respondents each from Germany, France, Italy, and the UK during the years 2024/2025. We employed best-worst scaling to assess food values and applied mixed logit models along with latent class cluster analysis for data analysis. Additionally, the survey included questions on participants' perceptions of responsibility for environmentally friendly actions and their attitudes towards governmental regulations and nudging measures. In our contribution to NIMCon 2025, we will compare the relevance of food values across Germany, France, Italy, and the UK, with a detailed examination of consumers in Germany. We will demonstrate the changes in food values from 2021 to 2024, focusing especially on the price-sensitive consumer segment, to reveal their views on sustainable purchases and related political policies. This contribution aims to uncover factors beyond pricing that may contribute to the attitude-behavior gap among price-sensitive consumers.

Monika Imschloß
FernUniversität Hagen

Transforming my Trash into Treasure: Why Consumers Value Personalized Upcycling

This research investigates consumer reactions to personalized upcycling, a novel form of commercial upcycling in which a company transforms a consumer's own waste materials into an upcycled product for the same consumer (e.g., transforming a consumer's old jeans into a weekend bag for them) . A field study and six controlled experiments show that personalized upcycling elicits more positive consumer reactions compared to made-to-stock upcycling (i.e., products made from waste materials that a company generates itself or receives from its suppliers) as well as other green products, such as recycled or secondhand products. This effect occurs because owning the waste materials (i.e., what is mine) before their transformation into a personalized upcycled product allows consumers to see the trait of environmental consciousness embodied in personalized upcycled products in themselves (i.e., what is me)—a process we term pro-environmental activation. Finally, we investigate a socially important downstream consequenceand demonstrate that the higher level of pro-environmental activation that consumers derive from personalized upcycling leads to enhanced pro-environmental behavior in areas beyond the product in question.

Carolin Kaiser
Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

The Changing Face of Product Search: Consumer Behavior with Generative AI vs. Traditional Engines

Generative AI chatbots like ChatGPT are emerging as compelling alternatives to traditional search engines for consumer product search. However, their impact on consumer behavior and experience in this context remains underexplored. In a large-scale study (n = 1,526) with a diverse U.S. sample, we employed custom-built software to track participants' search behavior as they completed product search tasks using either ChatGPT or Google. ChatGPT users completed tasks more quickly and were more likely to identify accurate product information compared to Google users. Despite these performance advantages, participants expressed a stronger subjective preference for Google. Preference for ChatGPT was more closely associated with individual personality traits. Importantly, ChatGPT users engaged significantly less with primary web sources, suggesting they viewed the chatbot as a one-stop solution rather than a gateway to external content. These findings provide critical insights into how generative AI is reshaping consumer product search, highlighting both its potential benefits and the challenges it poses for trust, transparency, and information-seeking behavior.

Vladimir Manewitsch
Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

Understanding Consumer Preferences for AI- and Human-Authored Books: An Explanatory Experimental Study

Books – both fiction and nonfiction – represent one of the first categories of consumer goods that can be fully generated by artificial intelligence (AI) in a quality indistinguishable from that created by humans. While AI-written books are about to quietly penetrate the market due to faster and cheaper production, practical and theoretical questions regarding consumers' responses to AI- versus human-made goods arise. Prior research in domains like art and music indicates a bias in preference against AI, but the transferability of these findings to a typical consumption context and their persistence in view of rapid spread of AI remains open. The study examines the effect of authorship disclosure on consumer preferences for AI- versus human-authored books and focuses on the underlying psychological and economical mechanisms responsible for possible valuation differences. Furthermore, potential effect heterogeneity factors like familiarity with AI are examined to interpolate future states of AI adoption. To estimate these effects, we conducted an online experiment using a crossover design for manipulation of authorship with a representative U.S. sample of approximately 1,500 adults. Mimicking a natural decision-making context, participants were presented with online sale pages for two new books within their preferred genre, which were randomly labelled as AI-authored or human-authored. Consumer preferences were assessed through reading interest, monetary valuation, and final product choice. Explanatory and moderating constructs collected from related literature were also measured and evaluated using causal mediation analysis. The results reveal a systematic bias against AI-generated books across all studied genres. The bias was more pronounced in fiction genres, reflecting higher expectations of human creativity. Furthermore, perceived author effort emerged as the most influential mediator, followed by emotional resonance and perceived proximity to the author. Potential moderators only slightly modified these effects, indicating their persistence over several phases of AI adoption. The findings suggest that consumer bias against AI-authored goods is not solely a matter of product quality but is rooted in psychology. While technological improvements may reduce concerns about accuracy or utility, social and emotional factors will likely sustain a segmentation of the market in AI- and human-made products.

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Benedikt Mangold
Technische Hochschule Nürnberg

Toxic Talk: Quantifying the Impact of Negative Behavior in Multi-Agent Decision Making

Effective communication among agents is crucial for achieving high-quality collective decisions in multi-agent systems. However, toxic behavior (such as manipulative, disruptive, or negatively biased interactions) can critically undermine these decision-making processes. In this study, we quantify precisely how toxic behavior influences decision outcomes, with a particular focus on the impact relative to group size. By systematically analyzing scenarios with varying agent populations, we measure the degradation in decision-making efficiency and consensus quality attributable to toxic interactions. The results clearly demonstrate that the severity of decision impairment depends significantly on group size and the proportion of toxic agents involved. Our research provides a reproducible baseline framework to quantify the specific effects of toxic behavior on the speed and effectiveness of decision-making processes in multi-agent systems.

Benedikt Morschheuser
University of Bamberg

Reassessing User Typologies in Gamification: Empirical Insights and Practical Implications for Tailored Motivational Design

Gamification is a popular practice increasingly used when designing digital products and services to influence user experiences and behaviors. Within this context, a significant research gap is the lack of understanding of how users' characteristics, especially in terms of their preferences for different forms of gameful interactions, moderate the effects of gamification and, furthermore, how gamification could be tailored to individual needs. Practitioners thus often draw on user typologies, or more specifically player typologies borrowed from game design, to tailor gamification approaches to a specific user groups. Despite their prominence in classifying users, current typologies and their use in research and practice have received severe criticism regarding validity and reliability, as well as the application and interpretation of their results. This presentation builds on the paper "Uncovering the theoretical basis of user types" and provides insights into an empirical analysis and critical discussion of established user typologies in research on gamification design. The talk examines correlations among player types of various typologies and common factors based on a confirmatory factor analysis. Our findings reveal five underlying and fundamental dimensions of Socialization, Escapism, Achievement, Reward Pursuit, and Independence and raise important questions about the applicability of established player typologies in practice. Finally, the talk discusses implications for researchers and practitioners seeking to design gamified, user-centric products, services, or marketing campaigns.

Petra Nieken
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

The Gender of Opportunity

We study the effects of gender-fair framing of job titles in online job ads in a randomized controlled trial in cooperation with a large online job platform in Germany. We investigate how the usage of a gender-fair job title affects the overall number of applications, the number of applications by females, and the share of female applicants. The goals of our study are (i) to investigate whether the number of female applications can be increased by deviating from the ``generic masculine'' which is typically used in German, (ii) to study whether any changes in overall applicant numbers are due to a specific sex of the applicants, and (iii) investigate whether and how these effects differ across job categories. We focus on three broad job categories: IT & Development, Business & Management, and Marketing & Sales, which differ in the share of employed females. Our study encompasses two treatments per each of the three categories: In the baseline, the job titles in the ads used the generic masculine. In the gender-fair treatment, the jobs were advertised using a gender-fair job title. Overall, the treatment manipulation did not affect the average number of applications or the number of female applicants. We observe a significant and positive treatment effect in Business & Management. The number of applications was higher, and job ads with gender-fair titles were clicked more often than those in the baseline. While there was no treatment effect for IT & Development in general, we find a positive impact of gender-fair job titles if the IT job was advertised by a non-IT company. We discuss potential mechanisms for our results.

Benjamin Scheibehenne
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

The Cognitive Processes Underlying Risk Perception

In my talk, I will present experimental work that aim to shed light on the cognitive processes that influence economic preferences. The theoretical perspective is embedded in the greater context of 'cognitive economics' and the basic idea is that economic preferences can partly be explained by basic psychological mechanisms of how people perceive numeric information.

Marcus Schögel
University of St. Gallen

Artificial Intelligence in the Customer Journey: Sweet, hot and white spots. A preliminary analysis from a holistic perspective

The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in customer-facing contexts has the potential to fundamentally reshape Customer Journeys. AI systems now try influence not only what products and services are presented to consumers, but also when, how and in what context these offers appear. Yet, AI is not confined to a single application area – it represents a cross-functional phenomena whose potential impact spans the entire Customer Journey. The key question is therefore not whether AI matters, but at which specific touchpoints and stages it creates the greatest opportunities and challenges for both customers and companies.

Timo Schreiner
Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

Me or We? How Self- vs. Other-Benefit Marketing Appeals Resonate with Different Consumer Types

In a time of growing online advertising clutter, marketers increasingly rely on strategies that make advertising more relevant and impactful. One promising approach is cause-related marketing (CRM), which links purchases to charitable donations and offers both self-benefits (e.g., fulfilling a shopping need) and other-benefits (e.g., supporting a cause) to consumers. Especially when combined with elements of individualization—such as allowing consumers to choose the supported cause—CRM can become a compelling alternative to traditional price promotions. Based on research conducted with German consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence suggests that campaigns with social benefit components—particularly those offering consumer choice—can be more effective than traditional discount-based promotions. However, effectiveness varies across consumer types: while some respond strongly to prosocial appeals, others remain price-focused. Psychographic characteristics such as personality traits and cultural orientation proved more insightful than sociodemographic factors in explaining these differences. In particular, consumers high in collectivism and openness were more receptive to CRM appeals. These findings offer practical guidance for designing marketing strategies that align with distinct motivational profiles—reflecting differences in consumer focus on personal gain versus social impact.

Birgit Stoltenberg
Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

From Niche to Mainstream? Exemplary Activism as a Driver of Food Citizenship and Sustainable Transformation in Food Systems.

Abstract Sustainability transformations often begin in niches where alternative practices are explored. This study investigates whether exemplary activism—specifically dumpster diving and foodsharing—promotes food citizenship and how these practices are perceived by the general public. A representative survey in Germany (N = 981) applied the text highlighting (TH) method, capturing participants' positive and negative reactions to short texts describing each activity. Dumpster diving elicited mixed reactions: raising awareness of food waste was well-received, while legal concerns were strongly criticized. In contrast, foodsharing was viewed more favorably, though logistical concerns were noted. Higher sentiment scores corresponded with stronger support for food citizenship and reduced food waste. Two respondent segments emerged: one supportive of both practices and one favoring only foodsharing, with the former reporting higher food citizenship levels. The findings suggest that visible, value-driven practices can encourage broader societal shifts toward sustainable food systems. TH proved effective in capturing nuanced public attitudes toward contested social practices.

Verena Tiefenbeck
Friedrich-Alexander-University Nuremberg-Erlangen

Greener or faster? Overcoming cognitive biases in travel planning

Substituting short-haul air travel with high-speed rail (HSR) can substantially reduce CO_2 emissions. Travel time is a key factor in transport mode choice, yet consumers often misjudge it—overlooking the full "door-to-door" duration of air travel. This bias is reinforced by decision-support tools such as Google Maps, which typically display total travel time for rail but only in-flight time for air, omitting airport access and egress. Such design choices may foster a "modern cognitive miserliness," where users rely on apps to minimize mental effort, leading to uncritical acceptance of incomplete information. As a result, travelers may overestimate the time efficiency of flying and undervalue environmentally friendly alternatives like HSR. Across three studies, we assess consumers' perceptions of travel time and investigate how the design of mobile travel apps influences users' choices between air and rail travel for short-haul trips.

NIM-FAU PhD-Grants

Xhovana Prenga
Friedrich-Alexander-University Nuremberg-Erlangen

Social Media Algorithmic Sensemaking

Social media platforms like Instagram have transformed how users connect, engage, and consume content, with the platform's algorithm playing a pivotal role in curating personalized experiences. Yet, how users interpret and respond to this algorithm, referred to as algorithm sensemaking, remains insufficiently understood. This study explores how Instagram users make sense of its algorithm and how this understanding influences their behavior. Using semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis, we apply and extend Ytre-Arne and Moe's (2020) framework of algorithmic folk theories, confining, practical, reductive, intangible, and exploitative, and identify two additional folk theories: 'algorithms are controllable', reflecting users' belief in their ability to influence outcomes through strategic engagement, and 'algorithms are representative', the perception that algorithms reflect interests and hobbies and/or parts of personal identity. The implications of these seven folk theories are significant for understanding digital consumer behavior and decision-making in AI-driven environments. They shape how users engage with content, assess credibility, navigate digital identities, and respond to marketing stimuli. For example, users who view algorithms as confining or exploitative may resist platform dynamics or avoid certain content, while those who see algorithms as practical and controllable may engage more strategically to shape their feed. By uncovering the nuanced ways users interpret and act upon social media algorithmic environments, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer logic and behavior in algorithmically mediated social media marketplaces.

Laura Schneider
Friedrich-Alexander-University Nuremberg-Erlangen

Human Metacognition in AI-Assisted Decision-Making

The growing capabilities and accessibility of (generative) AI systems are lowering the barrier to their use in a wide range of professional and personal decision-making contexts. Despite this increased integration, the ultimate authority in AI-assisted decisions often remains with human users. This places a dual burden on users: they must evaluate not only their own decision-making processes but also critically assess the input and recommendations provided by AI systems. As a result, successful collaboration between humans and AI increasingly relies on metacognition, which refers to the human ability to monitor and regulate one's own cognitive processes. However, it is still unclear how AI assistance influences these metacognitive processes during collaborative decision-making. This study addresses this gap by examining how the presence and the timing of AI assistance in a non-routine experimental task affect users' metacognitive engagement. The insights gained may inform the design of AI systems that promote human agency by encouraging metacognitive reflection, ultimately supporting thoughtful decision-making in AI-assisted environments.

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Celine Fleischmann / Moritz Engelhard
Friedrich-Alexander-University Nuremberg-Erlangen

SOMA – Somatosensory Optimization of Multisensory Advertising

Every day of our lives, we encounter advertisements in many forms. Some are presented on posters, others in newspapers. In the past decade, social media platforms have become the most important billboard for advertisements, with billions of US dollars being spent yearly. This new form of feed-based advertisement (TikTok, Instagram) has the advantage of more dynamic content, shorter conversion times, broader audiences, and targeted advertising. However, there is a lack of research on the role of multisensory integration, meaning the perception and processing of multiple sensory modalities in the brain, in such short, mobile-based video advertisements, and its eCect on consumer behavior. This is especially important in the context of sensory overload and conditions like ADHD, autism, or depression. Therefore, we propose a project that aims to examine the eCects of multisensory stimulation on consumer decisions using eye tracking and considering the personal preconditions of the recipients.

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Teilnehmerliste

Prof. Dr. Peter Bofinger	Universität Würzburg
Moritz Engelhard	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Celine Fleischmann	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Dr. Florian Gasser	Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften / Universität St. Gallen
Prof. Dr. Sebastian Goerg	Technische Universität München
Prof. Dr. Corinna Hempel	Hochschule Albstadt-Sigmaringen
Prof. Dr. Monika Imschloß	FernUniversität Hagen
Prof. Dr. Benedict Mangold	Technische Hochschule Nürnberg
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