



Behavioral Decision Making Group Colloquium Series

is pleased to present



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How Taking Photos Affects Enjoyment and Memory of Experiences

ABSTRACT

Experiences are vital to the lives and well-being of people; hence, understanding what amplifies or dampens enjoyment of experiences as well as memory for those experiences is important. We focus on photo-taking as a natural and frequent activity that occurs during many experiences but that has mostly gone unexamined in prior research. I will describe findings from two different projects that focus on the effect of photo-taking on (a) enjoyment from and (b) memory of experiences. What is common in these investigations is the intervening process. Specifically, we show that photo-taking affects engagement with the experience which subsequently affects both enjoyment and memory. Across several field and lab studies we show that taking photos improves enjoyment of positive experiences across a range of contexts and methodologies. This occurs when photo-taking enhances engagement with the experience, which is less likely when the experience itself is already highly engaging, or when photo-taking interferes with the experience. We further find that photo-taking directs greater visual attention to aspects of the experience likely to be photographed. Due to such heightened attention, we also find effects on memory. In particular, we find that photo-taking improves memory for visual aspects of the experience but can decrease memory for auditory aspects of the experience.

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