

# Yanyi Leng

Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis  
One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130  
l.yanyi@wustl.edu • www.yanyileng.com

## Education

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### Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis

Ph.D. in Marketing (Consumer Behavior)

Expected May 2026

- *Dissertation Title*: Consumer Evaluations of Corporate Generosity
- *Dissertation Committee*: Cynthia Cryder (Advisor), Stephen Nowlis, Fausto Gonzalez, Elanor F. Williams, Margaret Echelbarger

M.S. in Business Administration

2024

### The University of Chicago

M.A. in Social Sciences (Concentration: Psychology)

2020

Advisors: Nicholas Epley and Margaret Echelbarger

### University of Southern California

B.A. in Psychology (*Magna Cum Laude*)

2019

## Selected Employment

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### Booth School of Business, The University of Chicago

Research Specialist, Center for Decision Research

2020-2021

## Research Interests

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Prosocial Behavior

Gift Giving

Judgment and Decision Making

## Manuscripts in the Review Process

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Park, Alexander B.\*, **Yanyi Leng\*** (\*equal co-first authorship), Fausto Gonzalez, Jared Watson, Francesca Valsesia, and Cynthia Cryder, “The Reputational Benefits of Periodic Donations,” **conditionally accepted** at *Journal of Marketing Research*.

(Job Market Paper; Dissertation Essay 1)

\* *Best Behavioral Paper, Buchan Prize Paper Competition, Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis, 2025*

**Leng, Yanyi** and Cynthia Cryder, “Compliance Pressure Compromises the Warm Glow of Giving,” submitted to *Psychological Science*.

## Working Papers

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**Leng, Yanyi\***, Alexander B. Park\*, and Cynthia Cryder, “The Join-Us Penalty: Companies Get Less Credit for CSR When They Ask Customers to Help.” working paper.  
(Dissertation Essay 2)

**Leng, Yanyi**, Hulya Karaman, and Stephen Nowlis, “What Happens When Customer Ratings Differ Between First-party Websites and Third-party Websites?” working paper.

## Selected Work in Progress

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**Leng, Yanyi** and Elanor F. Williams, “Keeping Your Feelings Under Wraps: Recipients Choose to Hide Their True Feelings About Unwanted Gifts.”

## Conference Presentations

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(Only presentations where I was the presenter are listed.)

“The Join-Us Penalty: Companies Get Less Credit for CSR When They Ask Customers to Help,” *Talk accepted at the Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Washington D.C., October 2025.*

“The Join-Us Penalty: Companies Get Less Credit for CSR When They Ask Customers to Help,” *Talk given at the Annual CLIK Consumer Research Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, May 2025.*

“The Benefits of Periodic Donations,” *Talk given at the Olin Business School Buchan Prize Recognition Luncheon, St. Louis, MO, April 2025.*

“The Benefits of Periodic Donations,” *Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, New York, NY, November 2024.*

“The Benefits of Periodic Donations,” *Talk given at the Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Paris, France, September 2024.*

“The Effect of Discrepant Consumer Ratings on Purchase Likelihood,” *Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, San Francisco, CA, November 2023.*

“Does Checkout Charity Help or Hurt the Store? Consumer Reaction to a Store Partnering with a Charity,” *Poster presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Consumer Psychology, San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 2023.*

“The Effect of Discrepant Consumer Ratings on Purchase Likelihood,” *Poster presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Preconference, Atlanta, GA, February 2023.*

“The Power of Temporal Framing: Framing a Donation in Periodic Terms Increases Charitable Perceptions,” *Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, San Diego, CA, November 2022.*

“Givers Can Handle the Truth: Givers React to Recipients’ Honesty About Disliked Gifts Better Than Recipients Expect,” *Talk given at the Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Denver, CO, October 2022.*

“The Benefits of Getting Perspective: Recipients Prefer Requested Gifts, so Why are Givers Reluctant to Ask?” *Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, virtual, February 2022.*

“The Benefits of Getting Perspective: Recipients Prefer Requested Gifts, so Why are Givers Reluctant to Ask?” *Talk given at the UChicago MAPSS Academic Conference, virtual, May 2020.*

“Gamification as a Tool for Engagement and Learning,” *Poster presented at the USC Undergraduate Research Associates Program Symposium, Los Angeles, CA, October 2018.*

## Honors and Awards

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AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2025
Doctoral Fellowship, Washington University in St. Louis	2021-2026
Merit-based Tuition Scholarship, The University of Chicago	2019
Undergraduate Research Grant, University of Southern California	2018
Dean’s List, University of Southern California	2015-2019

## Teaching Experience

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<b>Guest Lecturer</b> , Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis	2024
Principles of Marketing (BSBA)	
<b>Assistant Instructor</b> , Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis	2022-2025
Marketing Management (MBA)	
Principles of Marketing (BSBA)	

## Service and Affiliations

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### Service

<b>Undergraduate Research Mentor</b> , Washington University in St. Louis	2023-2025
– Katherine Gong (2024-2025), Avery Chen (2023-2025), Natasha Chuka (2023-2024)	
<b>Ph.D. Student Representative</b> , Washington University in St. Louis	2024-2025
– AACSB Accreditation	
– Marketing Area	
<b>Alumni Mentor</b> , MAPSS, The University of Chicago	2020-2021

**Professional Affiliations**

Association for Consumer Research (ACR)

Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP)

Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM)

Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

## References

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**Cynthia Cryder (Advisor)**

Associate Professor of Marketing  
Olin Business School  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Email: [cryder@wustl.edu](mailto:cryder@wustl.edu)

**Stephen Nowlis**

Distinguished Professor of Marketing  
Olin Business School  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Email: [nowlis@wustl.edu](mailto:nowlis@wustl.edu)

**Fausto Gonzalez**

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
Olin Business School  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Email: [fausto@wustl.edu](mailto:fausto@wustl.edu)

**Elanor F. Williams**

Associate Professor of Marketing  
Olin Business School  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Email: [elanorfwilliams@wustl.edu](mailto:elanorfwilliams@wustl.edu)

**Margaret Echelbarger**

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
College of Business  
Stony Brook University  
Email: [margaret.echelbarger@stonybrook.edu](mailto:margaret.echelbarger@stonybrook.edu)

## Abstracts

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### **The Reputational Benefits of Periodic Donations** (Job Market Paper; Dissertation Essay 1) *with Alexander B. Park, Fausto Gonzalez, Jared Watson, Francesca Valsesia, and Cynthia Cryder*

How should firms best communicate their corporate social responsibility efforts? Across seven preregistered studies ( $N = 148,904$ ; two large field studies and five online lab experiments), we find that defining donations as a series of periodic contributions (e.g., \$20,000 per month for 12 months), rather than an equivalent aggregate amount (e.g., \$240,000 this year), improves the results for donor companies such as reputation, consumer engagement, and probability of purchase. The benefits of periodic framing are driven primarily by heightened perceptions of the donor's authentic prosocial motivation, which affects judgments and outcomes in two ways. Via one process pathway, the consistency of periodic donations increases perceptions that the donor gave due to authentic prosocial motives, which then increases favorable judgments of the donor. Via a second process pathway, heightened perceptions of the donor's authentic prosocial motivation also increase the perceived impact of the donation, further boosting favorable donor judgments. Additional studies demonstrate why the current research shows reputational benefits due to periodic donations even while other recently published research shows an opposite effect. Taken together, this research highlights consumers' sensitivity to cues of consistency, and the importance of perceived authentic prosocial motivation, when consumers grant charitable credit in CSR.

### **Compliance Pressure Compromises the Warm Glow of Giving**

*with Cynthia Cryder*

Recent research has identified vivid instances where individuals go to great lengths to avoid donation requests. Such observations appear at odds with separate, extensive literature about the warm glow of giving, showing that people often experience happiness when they engage in generosity. Across three preregistered experiments ( $N = 3,401$ ), we work to help reconcile these two conflicting sets of observations. We find that compliance pressure, an element of many donation appeals, leads to a compromised warm glow of giving. We propose that this pattern arises because compliance pressure reduces donors' sense of autonomy, which then negatively affects the warm glow of giving as well as potentially negatively affects consumers' interest in future donations. Taken together, this research shows that warm glow is not an automatic outcome of generosity, but rather, one that depends on the context in which giving occurs.

### **The Join-Us Penalty: Companies Get Less Credit for CSR When They Ask Customers to Help** (Dissertation Essay 2)

*with Alexander B. Park and Cynthia Cryder*

Companies often invite consumers to join them in charitable donation initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. While such involvement is typically intended to enhance the initiatives' prosocial impact, we propose that these appeals can sometimes backfire—a phenomenon we term the join-us penalty. Across four preregistered studies, we find that when companies invite customers to participate in their CSR efforts, consumers evaluate the company less favorably than when no such invitation is made. This effect arises from consumers' perceptions about a company's prosocial responsibility. Specifically, because consumers tend to perceive entities with greater resources as bearing greater prosocial obligation, inviting consumers to donate can be

seen as the company shirking their prosocial responsibility. We further identify key boundary conditions of the join-us penalty, showing that 1) who the company invites and 2) what the company requests in their donations moderate the effect.

## **What Happens When Customer Ratings Differ Between First-party Websites and Third-party Websites?**

*with Hulya Karaman and Stephen Nowlis*

Consumers often encounter discrepancies in product ratings between those listed on a brand's official website (first-party ratings) and those on independent, third-party websites (third-party ratings). For example, a consumer might want to stay at a particular hotel (e.g., the Marriott Los Angeles) and find that the rating of this hotel is different on the hotel's own website (e.g., Marriott.com) and a website not controlled by the hotel (e.g., TripAdvisor.com). We consistently find, across both field data and experiments, that consumers are more likely to purchase from a brand if a product's rating is lower on the brand's own website than on external platforms. This finding, which was not expected by marketing managers, is driven by perceptions of brand credibility, which are more positive when first-party ratings are lower than third-party ratings.

## **Keeping Your Feelings Under Wraps: Recipients Choose to Hide Their True Feelings About Unwanted Gifts**

*with Elanor F. Williams*

Individuals often receive gifts they do not like or want, and so they often face a decision: do they share how they feel about a bad gift and potentially hurt the giver's feelings, or do they hide the truth about how much they like the gift? Concealment is typical: recipients frequently choose to hide their true feelings, even though hiding the truth can have other unwanted consequences. The current research suggests that this tendency to withhold negative but honest feedback is driven in part by recipients' confidence in their ability to convincingly hide their disappointment. This tendency also contributes to the persistent misalignment between what recipients want and what givers choose to give them, as givers often remain unaware of how recipients really feel about their gifts.