



# 3<sup>rd</sup> **NIMCon**

NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting 2024

September 22-24, 2024

## NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting

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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.

Central topics of NIMCon 2024 are sustainable consumption and the impact of AI-based technologies on market decisions. We leverage different perspectives to gain deeper insights into the determinants of individual decisions as well as their consequences for 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 interface between science and practice. 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.

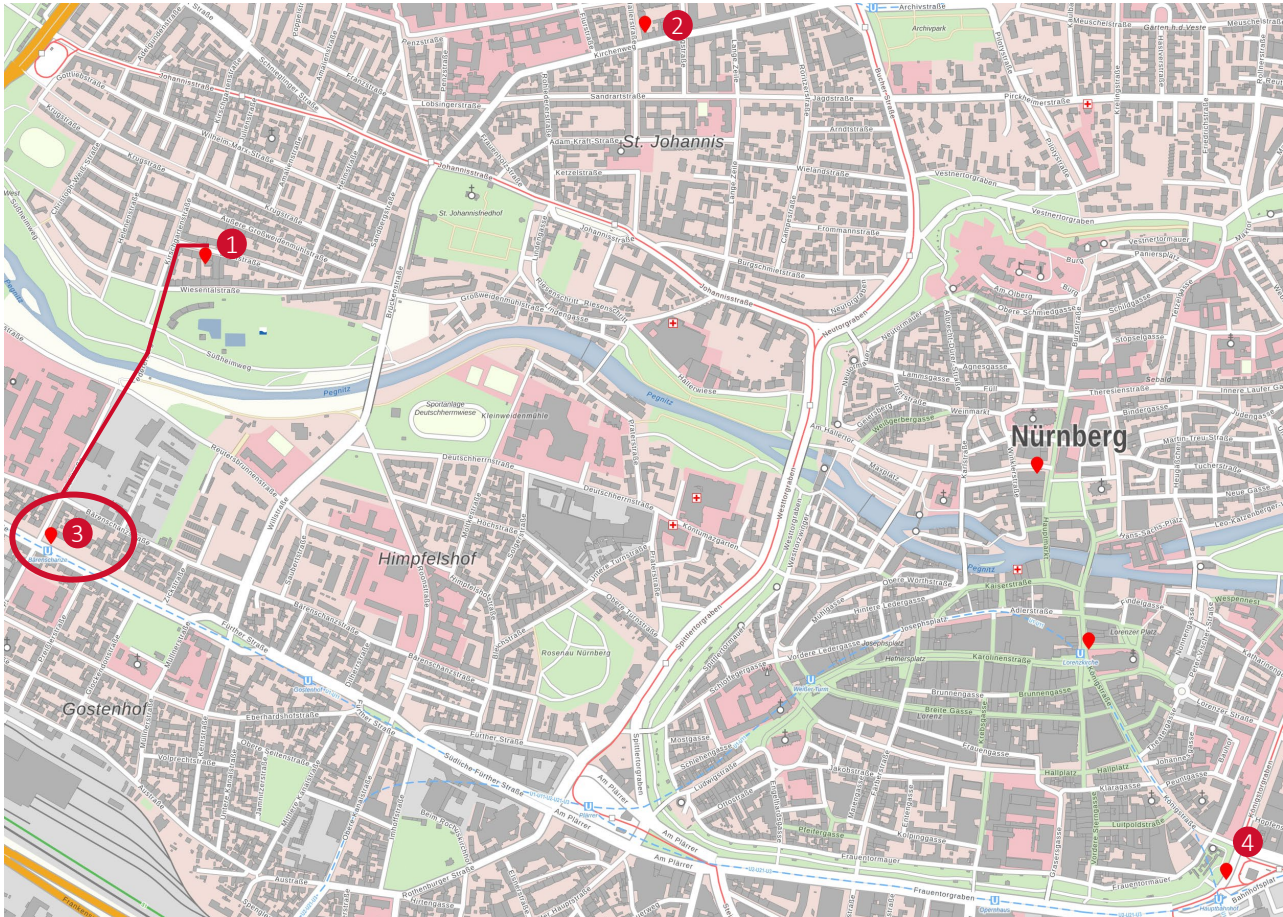
The Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions is the founder of GfK.

For more information, please visit [www.nim.org](http://www.nim.org).



## NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting

### LOCATIONS



1. Nürnberg Institut für Marktentscheidungen e.V. | Steinstraße 21, Aufgang B, 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Conference and Welcome Reception  
900 m from metro line 1, station “Bärenschanze”
2. Zeltner Bierhaus | Hallerstraße 32  
Dinner  
1200 m from conference venue
3. Metro line 1, station “Bärenschanze”
4. Nuremberg Central Station and Cloud One Hotel

## NIM Market Decisions Research Meeting

### PROGRAM

#### Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>

17:00 Informal Opening at NIM | Steinstr. 21

#### Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

09:10 – 09:30 Matthias Unfried,  
Andreas Neus Welcome and Conference Opening

#### Sustainable Consumption

09:30 – 10:15 Nina Hesel Sustainable brands, sustainable purchases? - The relationship between brand perceptions and consumer decisions

10:15 – 11:00 Michael Zürn Can carbon footprints change what we think or do?

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break

#### Social Media Influencer

11:15 – 12:00 Florian Gasser Influencing Purchases: The Effect of Social Media Influencers and Ad Awareness in Leisure Contexts

12:15 – 12:45 Carolin Kaiser Virtual Influencers and Advisors: How Character Design Shapes Consumer Engagement and Purchases

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch

#### New Products and Innovation

14:00 – 14:45 Kathrin Auer From Waste to Value: The Pricing Dilemma of Upcycled Products

14:45 – 15:30 Matthias Unfried The influences of decision-maker roles and time pressure on idea evaluation and selection: An experimental analysis

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

#### Consumer Psychology

16:00 – 16:45 Michail Kokkoris Rethinking Self-control: Implications for Consumers, Marketers, and Policymakers

16:45 – 17:30 Corinna Hempel Consumers' responses to rising food prices in Germany

18:30 Conference Dinner

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Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

### Assisted Shopping

10:00 – 10:45	Michael Jungbluth Patrick Cato	Digital Sales Assistants in ‚Bricks & Clicks‘ – Deciphering Relative Feature Importance for Shopper Engagement
10:45 – 11:30	Alexander Piazza	Decision Support in Tourism through Social Robots: Design and Evaluation of a Conversation-Based Recommendation Approach
11:30 – 12:00		Wrap-up and Farewell

### Contact

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Matthias Unfried [matthias.unfried@nim.org](mailto:matthias.unfried@nim.org)

Michael Zürn [michael.zuern@nim.org](mailto:michael.zuern@nim.org)

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### ABSTRACTS

**Kathrin Auer**

Deggendorf Institute of Technology

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From Waste to Value: The Pricing Dilemma of Upcycled Product

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This presentation addresses the pricing conflict regarding customer expectations and real prices surrounding upcycled products. Customers often expect these items to be cheaper due to their origin from waste or surplus materials. However, they are usually unaware that the procurement and production processes usually make upcycled products slightly more expensive than regular ones. This is because "free" waste is almost non-existent today; once a market or demand exists, previously discarded items gain value, including the energy value from incineration or biogas production. Additionally, the decentralized collection and processing of materials increase costs. Thus, manufacturers face the challenge of positioning their slightly pricier niche products against conventional competitors benefiting from economies of scale. In this presentation, potential sources of conflict and solutions for conflicts will be discussed.

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**Florian Gasser**

University of St. Gallen

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Influencing Purchases: The Effect of Social Media Influencers and Ad Awareness in Leisure Contexts

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The digital transformation and the increased use of social networks have significantly influenced communication processes and decision-making mechanisms in society. This change has led to the phenomenon of social media influencer marketing, which has created a substantial hype in the marketing industry and subsequently in marketing research in recent years. Particularly in the Consu context, the influence potential has so far been sparsely demonstrated. Using a positivistic model, the effects of social media influencers on recipients were further explained, employing a multi-stage research design that included multiple structural literature analyses, model derivations, and 2x3-between-subject-lab-experiments. It was found that ad recognition and purchase intention have an inverse, fully serial mediating effect between sponsorship disclosure and purchasing decision in a leisure context. These results reveal numerous research gaps, serve as a reference point for future research efforts, and assist marketers in designing effective SMI marketing campaigns that support future sales and marketing practices and promote innovative business models in SMI usage. For the leisure context, this approach was one of the first successful attempts in the nascent SMI research to demonstrate the effects of influencer categorizations and sponsorship disclosures beyond traditional operationalizations like brand attitudes and purchase intentions, as the variable of the supposed purchasing decision was included in the models and proven for the first time.

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### **Corinna Hempel**

Albstadt-Sigmaringen University

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Consumers' responses to rising food prices in Germany

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The food price inflation in 2022 has put considerable pressure on some consumers, leading to changes in their food choice and consumption behavior. To gain a better understanding of consumers' responses to rising food prices, we conducted an online survey among 1000 consumers in Germany, in which they were asked to self-report the extent of their changes during a period from the beginning of 2022 to November 2022. A principal component analysis was conducted to summarize the queried items into three factors, which were subsequently used for a cluster analysis. The emerging clusters were characterized in terms of sociodemographic as well as psychographic variables, namely locus of control, life satisfaction, optimism, pessimism, human values, and food values. The segment that appears to be most affected by rising food prices consists of about 28% of the sample's respondents and is characterized by a strong engagement in saving behaviors. These consumers are less satisfied with their lives and more pessimistic, corresponding to their lower incomes and lower likelihood to be fully employed. Communication and policy measures need to be designed in a way that these consumers regain stability and become more confident about the future.

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### **Nina Hesel**

Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

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Sustainable brands, sustainable purchases? - The relationship between brand perceptions and consumer decisions

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In a world marked by climate crisis, dwindling natural resources and social inequality, there is a growing demand for companies and brands to make a positive contribution to society and the environment. However, the marketing of sustainable products still faces the major challenge that consumers' positive attitudes and intentions towards sustainable consumption often do not translate into actual green purchasing behavior. But to enact attitudes via consumption decisions, products or brands must first be perceived accordingly. Given the abundance of sustainability claims and labels, the questions are: when do sustainability efforts translate into sustainable brand perceptions, and ultimately, into actual sustainable purchasing decisions? To investigate this, we cooperate with a large drugstore retailer to combine real-world product and purchase data with survey data on brand perception using the Perceived Purpose Scale developed at NIM (Zürn & Unfried, 2024).

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**Michael Jungbluth, Patrick Cato**  
Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt

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Digital Sales Assistants in ‚Bricks & Clicks‘ – Deciphering Relative Feature Importance for Shopper Engagement

Recent advancements in Large Language Models and Generative AI have opened new frontiers in retail shopper engagement through Digital Sales Assistants (DSAs). In this evolving tech landscape, retailers are challenged with optimizing DSAs for shopper benefit. While previous research on conversational agents has primarily focused on single features, DSAs integrate multiple features simultaneously to interact with shoppers. This necessitates a better relative understanding of the impact of DSA features when considered jointly. We surveyed 446 individuals using discrete choice experiments in a retail setting. Information origination and privacy aspects of a DSA drive shoppers' utility most, whereas non-verbal cues have less impact. However, the effects of non-verbal cues vary by context: In-store interactions thrive on humanized, credible cues, while at-home interactions succeed with less humanized, more likable DSA designs. Strong preference heterogeneity unveiled only a weak link between DSA features and better recommendation adherence.

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**Carolin Kaiser**  
Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

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Virtual Influencers and Advisors: How Character Design Shapes Consumer Engagement and Purchases

The rise of virtual characters, driven by advances in computer graphics and artificial intelligence, has revolutionized digital marketing, offering innovative ways for brands to engage with consumers. This research explores a critical design decision for virtual characters: choosing between a human-like or cartoonish appearance, and its impact on consumer reactions and purchase behavior. Conflicting theories suggest that while human-like characters may foster stronger bonds, they can also evoke discomfort, affecting consumer attitudes negatively. This study examines the impact of human-like versus cartoonish virtual characters on consumer reactions and purchase behavior. An online experiment with 2,000 American participants simulated shopping experiences with virtual influencers and advisors, revealing that both character types significantly boosted product purchases. Cartoonish virtual influencers outperformed human-like ones, fostering stronger parasocial relationships, greater satisfaction, and higher engagement due to reduced discomfort. In contrast, character design had minimal impact on virtual advisors. These findings guide brands in optimizing virtual characters for digital marketing and emphasize the need for ethical considerations regarding their influence on consumers.

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**Michail Kokkoris**  
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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Rethinking Self-control: Implications for Consumers, Marketers, and Policymakers

Self-control, often hailed as a cornerstone of personal success, is frequently misunderstood and misapplied in public discourse. This presentation delves into five prevalent misconceptions of self-control in the public sphere, exploring their far-reaching societal impact. By examining the gap between scientific insights and lay perceptions, I uncover how glorifying self-control can inadvertently stigmatize vulnerable populations, perpetuate social injustices, and oversimplify complex social issues. Furthermore, I question the paternalistic assumptions behind behavioral interventions aimed at enhancing self-control. This critical analysis advocates for more holistic and equitable strategies, and calls for marketers, policymakers, and researchers to rethink their approaches to consumer well-being and shift the narrative to acknowledge structural determinants of social problems.

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**Alexander Piazza**  
Ansbach University of Applied Sciences

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Decision Support in Tourism through Social Robots: Design and Evaluation of a Conversation-Based Recommendation Approach

Tourism recommendation systems can mitigate the potential impact of choice overload on tourists. Social robots are a promising approach to provide recommendations to tourists through an engaging and intuitive user interface on sites like tourist information offices. This study investigates whether tourists perceive tourism recommendations provided via social robots as a satisfying and effective experience and whether tourists respond better to a more human or robotic design of social robot interactions. Therefore, an experiment is conducted at a real-world tourist information office where 60 tourists are exposed to either the more human or robotic version of the social robot recommender system. Their feedback is collected with a survey. The results show that the social robot is perceived positively across all user-centric evaluation dimensions. This indicates that tourists accept social robots in real-world tourist recommendation situations and would also use them in the future.

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### **Matthias Unfried**

Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

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The influences of decision-maker roles and time pressure on idea evaluation and selection: An experimental analysis

We investigate how decision-making roles, differentiated by the level of responsibility for outcomes, and time pressure influence idea evaluation and selection. We utilize an experimental design engaging 160 R&D and business strategy decision-makers in the evaluation and selection of crowd-generated ideas. Our findings indicate that both decision-making responsibility and time pressure significantly affect idea evaluation and selection, underscoring the need for organizations to mitigate cognitive biases associated with these factors. Specifically, decision-makers with greater responsibility prioritize market potential over novelty and feasibility. Under time pressure, their focus on market potential intensifies. Interestingly, when time pressure coincides with high decision-making responsibility, there is a noticeable shift towards prioritizing feasibility, with reduced attention to market potential. With these findings we contribute to current research on idea evaluation and selection.

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### **Michael Zürn**

Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions

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Can carbon footprints change what we think or do?

Political regulation of business activities is often presented as the primary instrument to fight the climate crisis. Ultimately however, all economic activity is guided by consumer decisions because any business that loses consumers' support (for instance, because of its unsustainable business model) will cease its activities rather sooner than later. At the same time, when individual consumers face the concentrated market power of the big players, the playing field is not exactly level. Nonetheless, interventions aimed at nudging consumer decisions might be the most effective way forward if freedom of choice shall be preserved. Providing consumers with information about a product's or their personal carbon footprint currently is a hotly debated approach to guide consumers toward more sustainable decisions. However, neither the behavioral nor the cognitive consequences of informing consumers about the carbon footprint of their decisions are sufficiently understood. Generally, the carbon footprints of western consumers are too high if global warming shall be limited to an average temperature increase of about 1.5° by 2050. While some argue that providing information about carbon footprints will increase the demand for less carbon-intensive alternatives, we assume that this information will first of all trigger self-relevant emotions, such as guilt. Arguably, this emotional response might translate into a change of behavior, but it is also possible that consumers will change their cognition instead. Specifically, consumers might attempt to avert negative emotions by changing their beliefs, attitudes or attributions as defensive reactions of their "psychological immune system". A series of behavioral experiments provides answers to these questions.

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### ATTENDEES

<b>Kathrin Auer</b>	Deggendorf Institute of Technology
<b>Prof. Markus Beckmann</b>	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
<b>Tobias Biró</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Dr. Fabian Buder</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Prof. Patrick Cato</b>	Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt
<b>Holger Dietrich</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Dr. Florian Gasser</b>	University of St. Gallen
<b>Prof. Corinna Hempel</b>	Albstadt-Sigmaringen University
<b>Nina Hesel</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Prof. Michael Jungbluth</b>	Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt
<b>Dr. Carolin Kaiser</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Prof. Michail Kokkoris</b>	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
<b>Dr. Vladimir Manewitsch</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Dr. Andreas Neus</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Prof. Alexander Piazza</b>	Ansbach University of Applied Sciences
<b>Florian Ritter</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Birgit Stoltenberg</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Vanessa Seiss</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Dr. Matthias Unfried</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Lisa Maxbauer</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions
<b>Dr. Michael Zürn</b>	Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions