

Ed O'Brien

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EMPLOYMENT

- 07/18 – present Associate Professor of Behavioral Science
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Charles E. Merrill Faculty Scholar
- 09/19 – 03/20 Donald Morrison Faculty Fellow in Marketing
UCLA Anderson (invited visiting scholar year)
- 07/14 – 07/18 Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Willard Graham Faculty Scholar

EDUCATION

- May 2014 PhD, Psychology, University of Michigan
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
Pat Gurin Award (Best Research Program)
Philip Brickman Memorial Prize (Best Paper)
Golden Walnut Award (Best Talk)
- May 2009 BS, Psychology, Saint Joseph's University
Summa cum laude
University Scholar (top student of graduating class; > 1,000 students)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I study consumer behavior and hedonic/experiential consumption. I'm especially interested in time effects (e.g., how consumers' enjoyment of a product changes across usage) and how this connects to core marketing functions in a firm.

For example, in one line of work I study the psychology of repeat purchasing, which bears on customer relationship management (e.g., how firms can increase customer retention).

In another line of work I study consumers' hedonic trajectories, which bear on customer experience management (e.g., how firms can reduce boredom and design more enjoyable customer journeys).

RESEARCH LAB

I study these topics as director of the **Consumer Change Lab** at Chicago Booth. For more details, including details of our newest ongoing research, please see our lab website: eoblabs.com.

Current PhD students:

Stephanie Hong, 3rd year in Booth Marketing (CB Marketing job market track)
Tong Su, 3rd year in Booth Behavioral Science (CB Marketing job market track)
Jiabi Wang, 3rd year in Booth Behavioral Science (CB Marketing job market track)
Samantha Zaw, 2nd year in Booth Behavioral Science (job market track TBD)

Lab alumni, Marketing placements (academic):

Kate Christensen (former PhD student)—Marketing Faculty at Indiana University (Kelley)
Samantha Kassirer (former Master’s student)—Marketing Postdoc at UToronto (Rotman)
Alex Kristal (former lab manager)—Marketing PhD Student at London Business School
Xilin Li (former PhD student & dissertation committee)—Marketing Faculty at CEIBS
Lauren Lutzke (former research assistant)—Marketing Postdoc at UPenn (Kleinman Center)
Annabelle Roberts (former PhD student)—Marketing Faculty at UT Austin (McCombs)
Janina Steinmetz (former Postdoc)—Marketing Faculty at City University London (Bayes)
Yuji Winet (former PhD student & dissertation chair)—Marketing Faculty at Duke (Fuqua)

Lab alumni, Marketing placements (industry):

Mick Adkins (former research assistant)—Product Director at Primordial Labs
Shinhae Bang (former research assistant)—User Experience Researcher at Zoom
Allison Endres (former research assistant)—Service Operations Specialist at KEEN Footwear
Sarah Lee (former research assistant)—Marketing Manager at Barti Eyewear
Radhika Menon (former research assistant)—Associate Director, Digital at Horizon Media
Miguel Ortega (former research assistant)—Technology Consultant at Accenture
Craig Sanders (former research assistant)—Research Engineer (Human Perception) at Meta
Jaewon Yoon (former research assistant & honors thesis advisor)—Senior Data Scientist at Meta

RESEARCH ARTICLES

*** *Denotes supervisee*

53. ***Hong, Stephanie and Ed O’Brien (revise and resubmit, *Journal of Consumer Research*), “Repeatedly Soliciting Hedonic Reactions Can Exacerbate Hedonic Adaptation.”
52. Hagen, Linda and Ed O’Brien (revise and resubmit, *Journal of Consumer Research*), “Lost Time Undermines Return Behavior.”
51. Garcia-Rada, Ximena, Leslie K. John, Ed O’Brien, and Michael I. Norton (revise and resubmit, *Journal of Marketing*), “The Revised-is-Quality Heuristic: Why Consumers Prefer Products Labeled as Revised.”

50. ***Winet, Yuji K. and Ed O'Brien (data collection complete; writing for *Journal of Consumer Research*), "Refreshing the Familiar: Consumers Prefer Experiences with Callbacks."
49. ***Wang, Jiabi and Ed O'Brien (data collection nearly complete; writing for *Journal of Consumer Research*), "How Will Today's Marketplace Look Tomorrow? Consumer (Mis)Perceptions of How Products 'Age' Over Time."
48. ***Christensen, Katherine L. and Ed O'Brien (data collection nearly complete; writing for *Journal of Consumer Research*), "Personal Temporal Connection Boosts Market Value."
47. Hagen, Linda and Ed O'Brien (forthcoming), "When Did They Post It? How Temporal Markers Influence the Persuasiveness of Online Reviews," *Psychology & Marketing*.
46. O'Brien, Ed (forthcoming), "A Flexible Threshold Theory of Change Perception in Self, Others, and The World," *Psychological Review*.
45. ***Winet, Yuji K. and Ed O'Brien (forthcoming), "Familiarity Seeking: Growing and Learning From Repeat Experiences," in *Handbook of the Science of Existential Psychology*, ed. Kenneth E. Vail, Daryl Van Tongeren, Rebecca J. Schlegel, Jeff Greenberg, Laura A. King, and Richard M. Ryan, New York: Guilford Press.
44. O'Brien, Ed (forthcoming), "Things Change—But When? A Top-Down Approach to Understanding How People Judge Change Thresholds," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Changes in Human Perceptions and Behaviors*, ed. Kanako Taku and Todd K. Shackelford, London: Taylor & Francis.
43. O'Brien, Ed (2023), "Judging Change: A Flexible Threshold Theory," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 68 (1), 223-90.
42. ***Klein, Nadav and Ed O'Brien (2023), "Threshold Violations in Social Judgment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125 (2), 284-315.
41. ***Li, Xilin, Christopher K. Hsee, and Ed O'Brien (2023), "'It Could Be Better' Can Make It Worse: When and Why People Mistakenly Communicate Upward Counterfactual Information," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 60 (2), 219-36.
40. ***Winet, Yuji and Ed O'Brien (2023), "Ending on a Familiar Note: Perceived Endings Motivate Repeat Consumption," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124 (4), 707-34.
39. Weingarten, Evan, Kristen E. Duke, Wendy Liu, Rebecca W. Hamilton, On Amir, Gil Appel, Moran Cerf, Joseph K. Goodman, Andrea C. Morales, Ed O'Brien, Jordi Quoidbach, and Monic Sun (2023), "What Makes People Happy? Decoupling the Experiential-Material Continuum," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 33 (1), 97-106.

38. ***Kardas, Michael, Juliana Schroeder, and Ed O'Brien (2022), "Keep Talking: (Mis)Understanding the Hedonic Trajectory of Conversation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 123 (4), 717-40.
37. O'Brien, Ed (2022), "Look Back, Not Ahead? Time Use and the Value of Revisiting Past Experiences," in *Temporal Asymmetries in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. Christopher Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Alison Fernandes, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
36. ***Wald, Kristina A. and Ed O'Brien (2022), "Repeated Exposure to Success Harshens Reactions to Failure," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 103 (1), 1-18.
35. O'Brien, Ed (2022), "Losing Sight of Piecemeal Progress: People Lump and Dismiss Improvement Efforts That Fall Short of Categorical Change—Despite Improving," *Psychological Science*, 33 (8), 1278-99.
34. O'Brien, Ed (2022), "The 'Next' Effect: When a Better Future Worsens the Present," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 13 (2), 456-65.
33. O'Brien, Ed (2021), "A Mind Stretched: The Psychology of Repeat Consumption," *Consumer Psychology Review*, 4 (1), 42-58.
- Winner, ISSEP Best Paper Award
32. O'Brien, Ed (2020), "When Small Signs of Change Add Up: The Psychology of Tipping Points," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 29 (1), 55-62.
31. ***Kristal, Alexander C., Ed O'Brien, and Eugene M. Caruso (2019), "Yesterday's News: A Temporal Discontinuity in the Sting of Inferiority," *Psychological Science*, 30 (5), 643-56.
30. O'Brien, Ed (2019), "Enjoy It Again: Repeat Experiences are Less Repetitive Than People Think," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116 (4), 519-40.
29. O'Brien, Ed and ***Samantha Kassirer (2019), "People are Slow to Adapt to the Warm Glow of Giving," *Psychological Science*, 30 (2), 193-204.
28. ***Roberts, Annabelle R. and Ed O'Brien (2019), "Work Well-Being," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Psychology*, ed. Dana S. Dunn, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
27. O'Brien, Ed and Robert W. Smith (2019), "Unconventional Consumption Methods and Enjoying Things Consumed: Recapturing the 'First Time' Experience," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 45 (1), 67-80.
26. ***Klein, Nadav and Ed O'Brien (2018), "People Use Less Information Than They Think to Make Up Their Minds," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115 (52), 13222-27.

25. ***Kardas, Michael and Ed O'Brien (2018), "Easier Seen Than Done: Merely Watching Others Perform Can Foster an Illusion of Skill Acquisition," *Psychological Science*, 29 (4), 521-36.
24. O'Brien, Ed, ***Alexander C. Kristal, Phoebe C. Ellsworth, and Norbert Schwarz (2018), "(Mis)imagining the Good Life and the Bad Life: Envy and Pity as a Function of the Focusing Illusion," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 75 (1), 41-53.
23. O'Brien, Ed and ***Ellen Roney (2017), "Worth the Wait? Leisure Can Be Just as Enjoyable with Work Left Undone," *Psychological Science*, 28 (7), 1000-15.
22. ***Klein, Nadav and Ed O'Brien (2017), "The Power and Limits of Personal Change: When a Bad Past Does (and Does Not) Inspire in the Present," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113 (2), 210-29.
21. O'Brien, Ed and ***Nadav Klein (2017), "The Tipping Point of Perceived Change: Asymmetric Thresholds in Diagnosing Improvement Versus Decline," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112 (2), 161-85.
20. Chopik, William J., Ed O'Brien, and Sara H. Konrath (2017), "Differences in Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking Across 63 Countries," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 48 (1), 23-38.
19. Chopik, William J. and Ed O'Brien (2017), "Happy You, Healthy Me? Having a Happy Partner is Independently Associated With Better Health in Oneself," *Health Psychology*, 36 (1), 21-30.
18. O'Brien, Ed and ***Michael Kardas (2016), "The Implicit Meaning of (My) Change," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111 (6), 882-94.
17. ***Klein, Nadav and Ed O'Brien (2016), "The Tipping Point of Moral Change: When Do Good and Bad Acts Make Good and Bad Actors?," *Social Cognition*, 34 (2), 149-66.
16. O'Brien, Ed (2015), "Mapping Out Past Versus Future Minds: The Perceived Trajectory of Rationality Versus Emotionality Over Time," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144 (3), 624-28.

→ Runner-up, SJDM Einhorn Award

15. O'Brien, Ed (2015), "Feeling Connected to Younger Versus Older Selves: The Asymmetric Impact of Life Stage Orientation," *Cognition and Emotion*, 29 (4), 678-86.
14. Chopik, William J., Ed O'Brien, Sara H. Konrath, and Norbert Schwarz (2015), "MLK Day and Attitude Change: Liking the Group More but its Members Less," *Political Psychology*, 36 (5), 559-67.

13. Konrath, Sara H., William J. Chopik, Courtney Hsing, and Ed O'Brien (2014), "Changes in Adult Attachment Styles in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18 (4), 326-48.
12. Campbell, Troy, Ed O'Brien, Leaf Van Boven, Norbert Schwarz, and Peter A. Ubel (2014), "Too Much Experience: A Desensitization Bias in Emotional Perspective Taking," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106 (2), 272-85.
11. O'Brien, Ed and Linda Hagen (2013), "The Thrill of (Absolute) Victory: Success Among Many Enhances Emotional Payoffs," *Emotion*, 13 (3), 366-74.
10. O'Brien, Ed (2013), "Easy to Retrieve but Hard to Believe: Metacognitive Discounting of the Unpleasantly Possible," *Psychological Science*, 24 (6), 844-51.
9. O'Brien, Ed, Sara H. Konrath, Daniel Grühn, and Linda Hagen (2013), "Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking: Linear and Quadratic Effects of Age Across the Adult Lifespan," *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 68 (2), 168-75.
8. O'Brien, Ed, Phoebe C. Ellsworth, and Norbert Schwarz (2012), "Today's Misery and Yesterday's Happiness: Differential Effects of Current Life-Events on Perceptions of Past Well-Being," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48 (4), 968-72.
7. O'Brien, Ed and Phoebe C. Ellsworth (2012), "Polar Opposites: Empathy Does Not Extend Across the Political Aisle," *The Jury Expert*, 24 (1), 25-39.
6. O'Brien, Ed and Phoebe C. Ellsworth (2012), "More Than Skin Deep: Visceral States Are Not Projected Onto Dissimilar Others," *Psychological Science*, 23 (4), 391-96.
5. O'Brien, Ed and Phoebe C. Ellsworth (2012), "Saving the Last for Best: A Positivity Bias for End Experiences," *Psychological Science*, 23 (2), 163-65.
4. Bushman, Brad J. and Ed O'Brien (2012), "Aggression," in *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, ed. Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, New York: Academic Press.
3. O'Brien, Ed, Phyllis A. Anastasio, and Brad J. Bushman (2011), "Time Crawls When You're Not Having Fun: Feeling Entitled Makes Dull Tasks Drag On," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37 (10), 1287-96.
2. Konrath, Sara H., Ed O'Brien, and Courtney Hsing (2011), "Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15 (2), 180-98.
1. Anderson, Matthew A., Sarah A. Williams, and Ed O'Brien (2009), "Individual Differences in Preferred Neck-Resting Position of Caribbean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus Ruber*)," *Laterality: Asymmetries of Body, Brain and Cognition*, 14 (1), 66-78.

OTHER BUSINESS OUTPUT

*** *Denotes supervisee*

Selected Op-Ed articles (authored):

O'Brien, Ed, "Humans are Hard-Wired to Expect the Worst," *Washington Post*

O'Brien, Ed, "There's a Psychological Reason We Won't Return to Normal Right Away After Society Reopens," *Los Angeles Times*

O'Brien, Ed and ***Nadav Klein, "It's Hard to Shake a Bad Reputation," *Fortune*

Smith, Robert W. and Ed O'Brien, "Why You Should Eat Popcorn With Chopsticks, and Other Psychological Tricks to Make Life More Enjoyable," *The Conversation*

Selected Managerial Publications (authored):

***Yoon, Jaewon, Ashley V. Whillans, and Ed O'Brien, "How to Make Even the Most Mundane Tasks More Motivating," *Harvard Business Review*

O'Brien, Ed, "We Use Less Information to Make Decisions Than We Think," *Harvard Business Review*

***Kardas, Michael and Ed O'Brien, "Watching an Expert Do Something Makes You Think You Can Do It Too," *Harvard Business Review*

O'Brien, Ed, "Stop Putting Off Fun for After You Finish All Your Work," *Harvard Business Review*

Selected Podcasts (interviewed as guest):

"Why the Best Chocolate Is the One You Eat Last," *NPR All Things Considered*

"Finding Joy in Repeat Experiences, Even During a Pandemic," *NPR Ideas Network*

"Close Enough: The Lure of Living Through Others," *NPR Hidden Brain*

"How to Make Boring Work Feel New Again," *Fast Company*

"Confidence: Why It Misleads Us," *BBC Why Factor*

"It's Getting Worse! The Science of Negativity Bias," *Canvas8*

"YouTube Isn't as Good a Teacher as You Think," *Chicago Booth Review*

“You’re Underestimating the Pleasure of Talking to Strangers,” *Chicago Booth Review*

“How Managers Can Set Smarter Performance Benchmarks,” *Chicago Booth Review*

CONFERENCE TALKS

ACR (Association for Consumer Research):

2024, 2023, 2022, 2020, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2012

SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology):

2025—forthcoming, 2024, 2013

Choice Symposium:

2019 (session on Experiential Consumption)

INFORMS Marketing Science:

2021 (session on Experiential Consumption)

SJDM (Society for Judgment and Decision Making):

2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2011, 2010

BDRM (Behavioral Decision Research in Management):

2024, 2018, 2014

APS (Association for Psychological Science):

2022, 2017, 2016

Chaired symposia 2016, 2017

SPSP (Society for Personality and Social Psychology):

2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2018, 2016, 2015, 2013, 2012

Chaired symposia 2022, 2021, 2016, 2012

SESP (Society of Experimental Social Psychology):

2024, 2022, 2021, 2017, 2016, 2012, 2011

Chaired symposia 2022, 2021, 2016, 2012, 2011

INVITED TALKS

Boston University, Questrom (forthcoming), Marketing

UPenn, Annenberg (2024), Social Action Lab

UT Austin, McCombs (2024), Marketing

Dartmouth, Tuck (2024), Marketing

Cornell, Johnson (2024), Marketing

Yale SOM (2023), Marketing

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Gies (2022)
UCSD, Rady (2021), Marketing
Simon Fraser, Beedie (2021), Marketing
Data Colada panelist (2021)
Stanford GSB (2020), Marketing
Zoom U Behavioral Lab (2020)
UPenn, Wharton (invited; cancelled due to pandemic), Marketing
UCLA, Anderson (2019), Marketing
UC Berkeley, Haas (2019)
UCLA, Anderson (2019), Marketing
UToronto, Rotman (2019), Marketing
Cornell, BEDR (2019)
Duke, Fuqua (2019), Marketing
Harvard Business School (2018)
Michigan State University (2017)
University of Waterloo (2016)
University of Illinois Chicago (2015)
UCLA, Anderson (2013), Marketing
Cornell, Johnson (2013), Marketing
Yale SOM (2013), Marketing
Indiana University (2013)
Minnesota, Carlson (2013), Marketing
New York University (2013)
Chicago Booth (2013)
Stanford GSB (2013)
Harvard University (2013)

TEACHING

MBA: Managing in Organizations (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38001)

Each year since 2015; scheduled to teach next Summer 2025

Full time program, evening program, weekend program

Evaluations (969 respondents over 10 courses): Mean = 4.9, Median = 5.0, Mode = 5.0

PhD: Current Topics in Behavioral Science (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38903)

2016, 2018, 2020, 2023; scheduled to teach next Spring 2025

Evaluations (32 respondents over 4 courses): Mean = 5.0, Median = 5.0, Mode = 5.0

ADVISING

Dissertation committee chair:

Yuji Winet (placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, Duke Fuqua)

Dissertation committee member:

Melissa Beswick; Mike Kardas; Xilin Li; Sarah Molouki; Natalie Wheeler

Curriculum paper advisor:

Melissa Beswick; Stephanie Hong; Xilin Li; Yuji Winet

Undergraduate honors thesis advisor:

Yara Ganem; Hannah Noah; Ellen Roney; Taylor Rothman; Jaewon Yoon

Faculty mentor, National Leadership Alliance

Faculty mentor, Rising Scholars Program

Faculty mentor, DEI Program of SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology)

SERVICE

Associate Editor:

Social Cognition (2023 – present)

Editorial Review Board (2024 – present):

Journal of the Association for Consumer Research

Editorial Review Board (2021 – 2023):

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Conference reviewer (examples):

ACR (Association for Consumer Research)

SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology)

SJDM (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)

Grant reviewer (examples):

Marsden Fund

National Science Foundation

Booth workshop organizer (Center for Decision Research):

2023, 2019, 2016

Ad-hoc reviewer (examples):

Journal of Consumer Research; Journal of Marketing Research; Journal of Marketing; Management Science; Journal of Consumer Psychology; Journal of the Association for Consumer Research; Psychology & Marketing; Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes; Psychological Review; Psychological Science; Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; Nature Human Behaviour; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

HONORS & AWARDS

2024	SPSP Fellow (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2024	APS Fellow (Association for Psychological Science)
2023	APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions (Association for Psychological Science)
2023	ISSEP Best Paper Award (published in <i>Consumer Psychology Review</i>)
2019	SPSP Sage Young Scholar Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2019	SESP Fellow (Society of Experimental Social Psychology)
2018	Poets & Quants 40 Under 40 Most Outstanding Business School Professors
2017	ISCON Early Career Award (International Social Cognition Network)
2016	APS Rising Star Award (Association for Psychological Science)
2015	Pacific Standard Top 30 Thinkers Under 30
2012	SJDM Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award, Runner-up (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)
2010 – 2013	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (National Science Foundation)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

ACR (Association for Consumer Research)

SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology)

SJDM (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)