

# APRAJITA GAUTAM

CBA 5.334T

UT Austin

E-mail: aprajita87@gmail.com

Mobile: +1(551)3995398

## EDUCATION

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Current – PhD 2 <sup>nd</sup> year student (Marketing - Consumer Behavior) <i>Texas A&amp;M University, USA</i>	2020-2025 (expected)
Research Assistant (Marketing - Consumer Behavior) <i>Texas A&amp;M University, USA</i>	2019-2020
Master of Business Administration (Dual Major - Marketing & Finance) <i>XLRI Jamshedpur, India</i>	2009 - 2011
Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science; 1 <sup>st</sup> division with honors <i>APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, India</i>	2005 - 2009

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Sustainability, Consumer Well-being

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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### Works in Progress

**Product Perfectionism: Consumer tendency to own ‘perfect’ products: with Dr. Raj Raghunathan**  
(Manuscript under preparation)

*Abstract* - Perfectionist tendencies have been on a rise over the past few years. In the current research we posit that increasingly consumers in the marketplace and at their homes are seeking perfection in their possessions. We term this tendency - Product Perfectionism, define it conceptually and situate it with other relevant constructs in the nomological network. In addition, we construct a reliable scale for measuring Product Perfection and demonstrate that it predicts behaviors across different stages of a consumer’s journey, from product acquisition to consumption and disposal. Studies demonstrating predictive validity of the scale showed that consumers who were higher in Product Perfection were willing to pay higher for redundant/superficial features (such as perfect packaging) even in mundane products, reluctant to purchase refurbished products (even the ones with same product warranty), reluctant to repair broken possessions and more likely to replace them with new products.

**Reluctance to Repair: Perceived Relative Income and Entitlement as barriers to DIY Repair: with Dr. Raj Raghunathan**

(Manuscript under preparation)

*Abstract* - Repair is recognized as a key component of the circular economic system that aims to minimize waste. However, surprisingly little is known about what causes a few individuals to repair and others to not. It is assumed that the poor repair while the rich dispose. The current work highlights the importance of perceived relative income and entitlement in determining whether one chooses to engage in DIY (do-it-yourself) repair. We posit that over and above objective income, feeling relatively wealthier than the people around us can increase the reluctance to repair. We

further propose that the mere perception of owning more than others increases entitlement, which in turn leads to a faster devaluation of products and a subsequent reluctance in repairing them if they break. In 4 studies, we replicate our proposed effect under various contexts - using various product types and different types of repair. Across studies, we also use different measures of repair, and control for other potential mechanisms. In our final study, we adopt a manipulation of the mediator approach and demonstrate that the link between perceived relative income and reluctance to repair is weakened when consumers are made to feel lower entitlement.

**Household Activities: The joy in the mundane: with Dr. Amit Kumar** (Data collection in progress)

*Abstract* - Extant research finds that household chores produce lower positive affect vs. other activities but can result in people being in better moods compared to when they are working (Kahneman et al. 2004). In this project, we seek to understand the impact of performing various household activities on an individual's subjective well-being. Specifically, we aim to understand whether performing some of these activities improves consumer well-being and, if so, why?

**Applied Research at Procter & Gamble (P&G)**

2016 – 2017

**Researcher - P&G's Behavioral Lab (Global Emerging Markets Innovation Centre), India**

### **1. Total shopping journey of a store owner (retailer) in wholesale store**

I ran a multi country research (Mexico, India, Philippines, Turkey, China) to understand the key motivations of store owners while they stock up their own store. I ran an exploratory qualitative study (sample size - in depth interviews - 104 and shop-alongs - 74) to understand the key stages and behavior during the shopping journey. After constructing key hypothesis, I validated these via a quantitative survey (sample size - 525). The insights and action steps which I developed were adopted globally by P&G as part of the Global wholesale strategy.

### **2. Effective retailer communication via in-store point of sale material in wholesale stores**

I undertook this research across P&G brands to understand the types of communication ideas that could be used to influence the purchase decisions of small store owners during their shopping journey. This was the first time in P&G that we tried to map the drivers for retailers and subsequently the communication levers that could be used in store to influence purchase behavior. Further I undertook a quantitative study across P&G brands (sample size - 524) to understand the type of retailer claim/communication which could result in highest purchase intention.

### **3. STOP-HOLD-CLOSE – Influencing consumer via packaging, point of sale material and claim design for high frequency stores**

I conducted a **meta-analysis** of consumer & shopper research of over 10 years in P&G (50+ researches with 5000+ shoppers) to understand the key motivations that drive shoppers in small stores. I used the resulting insights to generate design principles of in-store communication vehicles (POSM, packaging, promotion communication). Today, these form the core of the global design toolkit for P&G.

### **4. Effectiveness of technological interventions (LED screen) vs. traditional point of sale material in influencing purchase decisions in store**

I undertook an **eye tracking study** of shoppers (sample size - 104) in small stores to compare the effectiveness of LED screens displaying product/pricing/promotion information vs. traditional POSM displaying the same. I augmented this by a post purchase survey to measure unaided and aided recall. The results helped quantify the impact of traditional vs. technological interventions in store.

### **5. Impact of emotional elements in diaper packaging on brand equity and purchase intention**

In order to understand the unconscious associations with design elements in packaging, I conducted an **eye tracking study combined with shopping simulation** and in-depth interviews. I contrasted the

proposed packaging of Pampers diapers with the existing packaging and its impact on purchase intention of shoppers in small stores.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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Gautam, Aprajita\*, and Raghunathan, Raj, "Reluctance to Repair: Perceived Relative Income and Entitlement as barriers to DIY Repair," Society of Consumer Psychology Conference, March 2022.

## INVITED PRESENTATIONS

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2022 University of Texas at Austin (MBA, MS and Undergrad course - Science of Good Business), on "Time and Happiness"

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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<b>Science of Good Business</b> , Teaching Assistant (Amit Kumar) Department of Marketing, University of Texas at Austin	Spring 2021, 2022
<b>Introduction to Marketing</b> , Teaching Assistant (Dr. Linda Golden) Department of Marketing, University of Texas at Austin	Fall 2021
<b>Product Management</b> , Teaching Assistant (Bill Peterson) Department of Marketing, University of Texas at Austin	Fall 2020
<b>Analyzing Consumer Behavior</b> , Teaching Assistant (Chiraag Mittal) Department of Marketing, Mays Business School	Fall 2019
<b>Effective Business Writing</b> , P&G Certified subject matter expert and trainer Procter & Gamble	2016 - 18

## SKILLS

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**Technical Skills - R, STATA, SPSS, Qualtrics**

**Trainings - Human Subject Protection Training through CITI (for IRB applications)**

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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<b>Procter &amp; Gamble</b>	2011 - 2018
Manager - Customer & Shopper Marketing - Feminine Hygiene Owner of Trade strategy and Trade spends for Whisper - \$330 mn brand in India	2018
Researcher - Global Emerging Markets Innovation Centre, India	2016 - 2017
Account Executive - National Store development organization Led a team of 9 P&G managers and 200+ distributor employees to deliver a business of \$100 Mn Developed organization expertise in shopper psychology and in-store analytics in Organized retail	2014 - 2016
Key Account Manager - Independent and Organized retail	2011- 2014

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

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Eugene and Dora Bonham Memorial Funds	2021
Graduate School Provost Supplement Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin	2020 -
Recruitment Graduate School College Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin	2020
Recipient, Graduate Research Travel Grant, Texas A&M	2019
Recipient, Department of Marketing Fellowship, Mays Business School, Texas A&M	2019
Procter & Gamble global award for "Innovation in Research"	2017
Procter & Gamble national award for "Power of Minds"	2017
Procter & Gamble national award for "Power of Agility"	2015
Procter & Gamble national award for "Executing with Excellence"	2013
Procter & Gamble national award for "Best in class fundamentals"	2012
Gold Medal for Best Incoming Student '05 in Graduation	2005
Scholarship from Canara Bank for academic excellence in Senior secondary	2003
2nd runner up International SAARC poetry competition	2003