

## MATT MEISTER

University of Colorado Boulder – Leeds School of Business

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### Employment

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University of San Francisco – San Francisco, California

Assistant Professor of Marketing – 2023:

### Education

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University of Colorado Boulder – Boulder, Colorado

PhD, Marketing (expected graduation: May 2023)

Ivey Business School at Western University – London, Ontario

HBA, *with distinction*, Business Administration (2018)

University of Waterloo – Waterloo, Ontario

Economics (2014 – 2016, transferred to Western University)

### Research Interests

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Online Decision Making, Information Search, Consumer Financial Decision Making,  
Research Methods, Open Science

### Teaching Interests

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Data/Customer Analytics, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Case Method

### Invited Revisions & Under Review

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Meister, Matt, and Nicholas Reinholtz. User-Generated Star Ratings Are Not Inherently Comparable. *Under review at Journal of Consumer Research*.

- [Link to paper](#)

Meister, Matt, and Nicholas Reinholtz. Quality in Context: Evidence for the Arbitrary Influence of Situational Factors on User-Generated Product Ratings. *Under review at Journal of Marketing*.

- [Link to paper](#)
- [Link to code used to scrape reviews](#)

Kan, Christina, Philip M. Fernbach, John G. Lynch, and Matt Meister. Component Effects of Budget Tracking on Consumer Spending. *Preparing for resubmission to Journal of Consumer Research (reject and resubmit)*.

## Research in Progress

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Meister, Matt, Joe J. Gladstone, and Emily N. Garbinsky. Reducing Financial Anxiety Through Communication. *Preparing for submission to OBHDP*.

- *Working paper available upon request.*

Meister, Matt and Donald R. Lichtenstein. Unnamed college football project. *Dataset scraped*.

Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz. “I haven’t tried it, so it’s perfect”: Ratings Procured Before Products are Used. *Dataset scraped, analysis and writing ongoing*.

Meister, Matt and Quentin André. Good Reviews Are Good, Bad Reviews Can Be Bad: Consumer Responses to Reviews. *Data collection ongoing*.

## Refereed Conference Publications

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Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2022). User-Generated Star Ratings Are Not Inherently Comparable. *Proceedings of the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*. Austin, TX: Cognitive Science Society.

## Conference Presentations (asterisk denotes presenter)

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\* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2022). Cold, Rain, and Snow: Trouble for Star Ratings. *Society for Judgment and Decision Making: San Diego*. Poster.

\* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2022). Cold, Rain, and Snow: Trouble for Star Ratings. *Association for Consumer Research: Denver*. Talk (Special Session).

\* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2022). User-Generated Star Ratings Are Not Inherently Comparable. *Cognitive Science Society: Toronto*. Poster (with full paper publication).

\* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2022). User-Generated Star Ratings Are Not Inherently Comparative. *Society for Consumer Psychology: Virtual*. Flash Talk.

\* Meister, Matt and Joe J. Gladstone (2022). Is a (Money) Problem Shared a Problem Halved? How Talking About Money Reduces Financial Stress. *Society for Consumer Psychology: Virtual*. Poster.

\* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2021). Four Stars: Out of Five, But of What? *Society for Judgment and Decision Making: Virtual*. Poster.

- Awarded second place prize in student poster competition.
- \* Meister, Matt and Joe Gladstone (2021). [Is a \(Money\) Problem Shared a Problem Halved? How Talking About Money Reduces Financial Stress](#). *Association for Consumer Research: Virtual*. Talk (Special Session).
- \* Meister, Matt and John G. Lynch (2021). A Memory Explanation for Planning Adjustment. *Society for Consumer Psychology: Virtual*. Talk (Special Session).
- \* Meister, Matt and Nicholas Reinholtz (2020). Online Reviews: An Accurate Source of Product Attribute Information(?). *Society for Judgment and Decision Making*. Poster.
- \* Meister, Matt and John G. Lynch (2020). [A Memory Explanation for Planning Adjustment](#). *Association for Consumer Research: "Paris"*. Talk (Special Session).
- \* Meister, Matt and John G. Lynch (2020). A Query Theory Explanation for Planning Adjustment. *Society for Consumer Psychology: Huntington Beach*. Poster.

## Teaching Experience

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### *Instructor Experience:*

Digital Marketing Tools (MKTG 2700; University of Colorado Boulder; [Syllabus](#))  
 Spring 2021 – Average FCQ evaluation: 4.96/5 ([Full report](#))  
 Spring 2022 – Average FCQ evaluation: 4.81/5 ([Full report](#))

### *Teaching Assistant Experience:*

Fundamentals of Data Analytics (MSBX 5410; University of Colorado Boulder)  
 Summer 2022 (3 sections), Head TA for Nick Reinholtz  
 Customer Analytics (MSBX 5310; University of Colorado Boulder)  
 Spring 2020 (2 sections), TA for Scott Shriver  
 Digital Marketing (MBAX 6350 & MKTG 3700; University of Colorado Boulder)  
 Spring 2020 (3 sections), TA for Emily Edwards

## Recognition

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CU Boulder Graduate School Summer Fellowship Winner (\$6,000; 2022)  
 SJDM Student Poster Competition (2<sup>nd</sup> Prize; 2021)  
 SJDM Student Poster Competition (Honorable Mention; 2022)  
 American Marketing Association Sheth Doctoral Consortium Invitee (2022)  
 Academy of Marketing Science Doctoral Consortium Invitee (2022)  
 Gerald Hart Doctoral Research Fellowship (2019, 2020)

## Affiliations

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Association for Consumer Research  
Society for Judgment and Decision Making  
Society for Consumer Psychology  
Academy of Marketing Science  
Center for Research on Consumer Financial Decision Making (CU Boulder)  
European Marketing Academy  
Cognitive Science Society

## Service

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Reviewer, Society for Consumer Psychology (2021)  
Reviewer, Association for Consumer Research (2021)  
Trainee Reviewer, Journal of Consumer Research (2022)

## Research Skills (Not Exhaustive)

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R programming (ANOVA, linear regression, mixed-effects regression, machine learning, simulation, data.table and tidyverse, ggplot2)  
[spectser on github](#): An R package for writing, running, and plotting specification curve analyses  
Python (web scraping, data wrangling)  
Qualtrics

## References

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### \* **Nicholas Reinholtz**

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### \* **John G. Lynch**

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### \* **Joe J. Gladstone**

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### **Philip M. Fernbach**

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### **Christina Kan**

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## Selected Abstracts

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### **User Generated Star Ratings Are Not Inherently Comparable**

*Meister and Reinholtz*

*Under Review at Journal of Consumer Research*

[Link to Job Market Paper](#)

User-generated ratings—often elicited and presented as “star ratings”—are among the most influential sources of information for consumers online, but their ability to lead consumers to make utility-maximizing decisions is uncertain. This paper identifies an inherent, structural problem with star ratings: Ratings are created for single alternatives in isolation. As a result, ratings are affected by differences in raters’ frames of reference, which are meaningless to consumers. Through nearly 1 million quarterly observations of 343,327 Airbnb listings, we demonstrate one consequence of this—ratings vary over time due to variation in context, not quality. We then experimentally demonstrate this structural misalignment, showing that objectively superior alternatives can receive lower ratings than inferior competitors when the superior alternative engenders higher expectations. In our experiments, future consumers demonstrate little awareness of this possibility, becoming less likely to make utility-maximizing decisions when shown these ratings. Five follow-up experiments address alternative explanations, provide process evidence, and contextualize our demonstration to the marketplace.

### **Quality in Context:**

#### **Evidence for the Arbitrary Influence of Situational Factors on User-Generated Product Ratings**

*Meister and Reinholtz*

*Under review at Journal of Marketing*

[Link to paper](#) – [Link to Python code used to scrape reviews](#)

User-generated ratings (e.g., “star ratings”) are said to benefit consumers by conveying experienced quality—how enjoyable a product is to consume. However, consumption experience is a function of both features intrinsic to the product and incidental aspects of the consumption context. In this paper, we provide evidence that consumption context can bias individual ratings, which is problematic for prospective consumers using ratings as a proxy for a product’s intrinsic quality. Using roughly 41,000 ratings scraped from REI.com, we find that cold-weather gear is rated lower during unexpected periods of colder temperature, while other product ratings are unaffected by these fluctuations in temperature. We supplement this data with an experiment showing how random variation in consumption context can arbitrarily influence demand for specific products. Our findings have implications for consumers—who must exert greater caution when interpreting ratings—and platforms—whose review collection and presentation could be improved by considering raters’ contexts.

**Reducing Financial Anxiety Through Communication: Evidence from Large-Scale Surveys, Financial Message Boards, and a Longitudinal Diary Study**

*Meister, Gladstone, and Garbinsky*

*Under review at Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

We hypothesize that sharing money problems decreases the anxiety a person feels towards their finances. We support this hypothesis using multiple data sources, including posts scraped from two online forums ( $N = 343,786$  and  $561,061$ ), two surveys ( $N = 101,844$  and  $711$ ), as well as a longitudinal diary study ( $N = 533$ , Nobs =  $2,519$ ) where we experimentally test the benefits of talking. Results indicate that talking about money benefits consumers by reducing feelings of stress and anxiety towards their finances. The diary study explores potential process explanations, such as the impact of receiving amounts of specific advice and/or emotional support from communications partners. Additional analyses find preliminary evidence for a moderating role for financial hardship, with those in greatest hardship benefiting most from talking about their finances.