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Putting Preferences for Randomization to Work

21 September 2026 (Mon)
11:00–12:30

WYL314, 3/F, Dorothy Y. L. Wong
Building, Lingnan University



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BIOGRAPHY

Professor Songfa Zhong is a Chair Professor of Economics and Pan Yi Professor of Business at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. His research focuses on behavioral economics, including behavioral economic theory, experimental research, and their applications. His work is highly interdisciplinary and employs a variety of research methods, spanning fields such as artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and genetics. Professor Zhong has published dozens of academic papers in leading economics journals, including the *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *International Economic Review*, *Journal of Econometrics*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *Quantitative Economics*, and *Review of Economics and Statistics*, as well as interdisciplinary journals, such as *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, *Management Science*, *Psychological Science* and *Neuron*. He currently serves as an Associate Editor of *Management Science* and a Coordinating Editor of *Theory and Decision*.

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates preferences for randomization and conceptualizes nudgeability as susceptibility to information-free, randomization-based nudges. Conducting a multi-day and large-scale experiment, we evaluate the effect of randomized defaults, randomized delegation, and randomized advice, as well as some of their combinations. We find that these nudges alter decisions predominantly when choices are complex and individuals are indecisive. Additionally, individuals exhibit a substitution effect between randomized defaults and delegation, along with a preference for commitment by favoring binding delegation over non-binding advice. These empirical patterns align with models of incomplete preferences, whereby individuals cannot rank available options and use randomization-based nudges to complete their ranking.