

Brian A. Toney

Curriculum Vitae

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Food Economics, Behavioral & Experimental Economics, Information Economics, Neuroeconomics

EDUCATION

Texas A&M University

Ph.D., Agricultural Economics

Chair: Dr. Marco A. Palma

Anticipated August 2024

Texas A&M University

B.Sc., Economics

May 2017

JOB MARKET PAPER

Toney, B.A., Palma, M.A., Segovia, M.S., & Melo, G. "The Instrumental Value of Calorie Information and its Effect on Food Choices"

Abstract: Previous literature regarding the effects of calorie information on food choices is contradictory with empirical findings showing decreasing, null, and even increasing calorie intake effects. We present a model based on an expectation-realization (ER) framework to rationalize the instrumental value of information and its potential to influence choice. Our model proposes that information possess instrumental value only when there is a gap between an individual's expectations for the information and the actual realization via information provision. When this gap is zero, information lacks novelty and it fails to influence decisions. In contrast, a substantial expectation-realization gap increases information's instrumental value, making it more likely to influence choices. We test our model empirically by conducting a framed field experiment in a food setting where we exogenously manipulate the calorie expectations of customized meals that look nearly identical but differ significantly in caloric content. Our results support the model's predictions and rationalizes previous contradictory empirical findings of calorie information on food choices and provides a relevant framework to explain information failures in other domains.

WORK IN PROGRESS

[1] "The Mobility and Dynamics of Competition" (V. Vitaku, M.A. Palma, & B.A. Toney)

Project Status: Data collection in process.

Next Steps: Data analysis and write-up.

[2] "High Stake and Distractions: The Origin of Cognitive Load and Its Effect on Performance" (B.A. Toney, M.A. Palma, & A.C. Drichoutis)

Project Status: Design finalized, secured IRB approval, OTree code is in development.

Next Steps: Complete the oTree code, register the study with the American Economic Association Randomized Control Trials Registry, and begin data collection.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- [1] Toney, B.A., Palma, M.A., Segovia, M.S., Melo, G. "The Instrumental Value of Calorie Information and its Effect on Food Choices." Session Chair Decision Theory Session at ESA annual meeting, Charlotte, NC, 19-22 October 2023.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Equipment Manager

Human Behavior Lab (HBL)

January 2023-Present
Texas A&M University

- Manage and maintain the neurophysiological equipment and software of one of the largest neuroeconomic lab in the world.
 - Neurophysiological Technology at HBL: Tobii Eye-Trackers, Tobii Wearable Glasses, Shimmer Galvanic Skin Response devices, iMotions Eye Tracking, and Facial Expression to Access Emotions.
- Ensure that all of the neurophysiological equipment at the HBL remains operational during experimental sessions.
- Troubleshoot hardware and software issues, providing prompt resolutions to maintain the integrity of experimental sessions.

Graduate Research Assistant

Human Behavior Lab (HBL)

January 2022-Present
Texas A&M University

- Reveal the drivers of human decision-making using eye-tracking, facial expression analysis, galvanic skin response, and neural signals.
- Collaborate with economists, psychologists, and public health experts to better understand the factors driving individuals' decisions in multiple domains.
- Conceptualize, develop, carry out, and evaluate the results of experiments pertaining to academic research.
- Design, implement, and analyze data of economic experiments.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Instructor

Department of Agricultural Economics

September 2020-December 2021
Texas A&M University

- Instructed 502 undergraduate students in two 300-level courses over four academic semesters.
- Developed syllabi, coursework, assignments, examinations, and case studies to fulfill core course requirements.
- Oversaw the grading of assignments, coursework, and examination by a Graduate Teaching Assistant assigned by the department.
 - AGEC 340: Agribusiness Management (Summer 2021 & Fall 2021)
 - * Taught the principle of management using case studies to evaluate management issues in agribusiness firms to 357 undergraduate students over two academic semesters.
 - * Instructor Effectiveness Evaluation: 3.92/5 ($N=86$)
 - AGEC 317: Economic Analysis for Agribusiness Management (Fall 2020 & Spring 2021)
 - * Introduced applied econometrics, utility maximization, production theory, and linear programming to 145 undergraduate students over two academic semesters.

* Instructor Effectiveness Evaluation: 4.32/5 (N=31)

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Department of Agricultural Economics

September 2017-August 2020

Texas A&M University

- Assisted professors in the department with teaching core curriculum classes
 - AGEC 105: Introduction to Agricultural Economics
 - AGEC 429: Agricultural and Food Policy
- Recorded attendance, held office hours, proctored exams, and graded assignments.
- Hosted review sessions for upcoming exams.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

President

Graduate Student Association (GSA), Dept. of Agricultural Economics

Term: 2020-2021

Texas A&M University

- Elected as GSA president in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading a departmental governmental body with around 160 students.
- Enhanced democratic engagement and accessibility for all GSA members by successfully revising and ratifying the constitution to institutionalize online elections. Before this change to the organization's constitution, only students who attended the first meeting of the academic school year were able to vote for their GSA Officers.

TECHNICAL STRENGTHS

Programming Languages

R, STATA, Python, MATLAB, OTree, GAMS

Computer Software

Microsoft Office, Latex, Jupyter Notebooks, Qualtrics, iMotions, Tobii

Equipment

Tobii Eye Trackers, Shimmer Galvanic Skin Response (GSR)

ACADEMIC AWARDS & HONORS

Robert G. Cherry Graduate Fellowship

Texas A&M University

August 2018-May 2021

Graduate Assistantship

Texas A&M University

September 2017-Present