

# UNIST SBA Colloquium

The Impact of Benefit Ambiguity and Asymmetric Herding Effects on  
Mobile App Permission Decisions

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**On-line Seminar, May. 12<sup>th</sup> Fri. 13:00 ~**

<https://unist-kr.zoom.us/j/86081185496>

**(This seminar will be conducted in English)**

## Abstract

This study conducts a field experiment to enhance our understanding of the factors affecting permission grants to mobile apps that access personal information or device functionalities. Specifically, we focus on how different levels of information on benefit (benefit ambiguity) and knowing others' permission status affect users' permission granting to mobile apps. Two hundred eighty-three mobile users who installed our experimental app were observed their change in the permission setting for two weeks responding to our treatments. We find that participants who received the detailed reward scheme (low in benefit ambiguity) shared significantly more information items than participants who received the abstract reward scheme (high in benefit ambiguity). We also find the asymmetric herding effect, where participants who shared fewer items than the average were significantly encouraged to share more by obtaining the feedback of others' information sharing status, whereas participants who shared more than the average were not affected by the feedback. Lastly, there was a significant interaction effect between our treatments, such that the asymmetric herding effects were greater for participants who received the detailed reward scheme. We discuss the implications and future directions of our study.

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