



Topics for Bachelor and Master Theses
for the **Winter Semester 2021/22**
(June 3, 2021)

Application

- Your application (in English or German) should include the following contents: Topic requests with your individual prioritization/ranking of your interest (e.g., B3, B11, B17, B16, B15), overview of your previous academic performance, a short curriculum vitae, (and optionally an own topic suggestion that we will check if it fits to our research expertise and if it is feasible, without guarantee that we will supervise it). Please bundle everything into a **single PDF file** labeled with your last name only and submit it to: marketing@wifa.uni-leipzig.de
- The application deadlines are:
 - **December 31st for the summer semester** (we will inform you about your topic in January)
 - **June 30st for the winter semester** (we will inform you about your topic in July)
- After successful application, consultation with your supervisor, and confirmation of supervision, you must register the topic with the Admissions Office by the **end of February for the summer semester** and by the **end of August for the winter semester** at the latest so that you can complete your studies this semester.
- Please follow our published guidelines very carefully.

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Bachelor

B1. The evolution and impact of qualitative research in academic journals for strategic marketing

Despite their importance in the development of concepts, qualitative methods are increasingly rare in the marketing literature. There have been explicit calls to not neglect this relevance. As an explorative approach, qualitative research is particularly crucial for the generation of theory which can later be statistically tested using quantitative methods. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to shed a light on previous publications on qualitative research in academic journals for strategic marketing (Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science and International Journal of Research in Marketing). The student should provide a comprehensive overview on the qualitative literature and analyze and evaluate its respective and the overall impact within the marketing literature.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B2. The evolution and impact of qualitative research in academic journals for consumer behavior

As an explorative approach, qualitative research is particularly crucial for the generation of theory which can later be statistically tested using quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are increasingly rare in the marketing literature, despite their importance in the development of concepts. There have been explicit calls to not neglect this relevance. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to shed a light on previous publications on qualitative research in academic journals for consumer behavior (Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Applied Psychology und Journal of Consumer Psychology). The student should provide a comprehensive overview on the qualitative literature and analyze and evaluate its respective and the overall impact within the marketing literature.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B3. Success factors for research articles in strategic marketing – Top 10 of the Journal of Marketing

According to their impact on research, academic journals get ranked. The same applies to researchers, whose impact is measured by the frequency their articles are cited. Evidently, researchers strive to contribute significantly and therefore advance the state of research. Thus, the question arises which characteristics make research articles successful. What makes them that important in academic research? What issues do they address? What type of articles are they? The goal of this bachelor thesis is to provide an comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the most successful articles in the Journal on Marketing to give an answer to the questions posed.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede



B4. Success factors of research articles in consumer behavior – Top 10 of the Journal of Consumer Research

To indicate the relevance an academic journal has on research, they are ranked. The same applies to researchers, whose impact is measured by the frequency their articles are cited. Evidently, researchers strive to contribute significantly and therefore advance the state of research. Thus, the question arises which characteristics make research articles successful. What makes them that important in academic research? What issues do they address? What type of articles are they? The goal of this bachelor thesis is to provide an comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the most successful articles in the Journal on Marketing to give an answer to the questions posed.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B5. How do consumers use wine bottle labels as information about the experience product's quality?

So called experience or credence products, whose quality and pleasantness can hardly be assessed in advance, take on a special role in the marketing research, since the consumer's decision making can only be based on external factors in the absence of prior experience. One such product is wine. Usually, the consumer does not have the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase and is therefore unknowing about whether he will like the it. Thus, the extrinsic dimensions, in this case the packaging, are being consulted to make a decision. In addition, the majority of wine consumers are rather laypeople that derive little value from the information provided on the label. This bachelor thesis should shed a light on the influence the bottle labels have on the consumer's quality assessment of the wine as well as his purchase decision.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B6. Potential success factors of external cues for experience products

Wine is one of the products whose quality and pleasantness can hardly be assessed in advance. These products which are referred to as experience or credence products, take on a special role in the marketing research, since the consumer's decision making can only be based on external factors in the absence of prior experience. Usually, the consumer does not have the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase and is therefore unknowing about whether he will like the it. Thus, the extrinsic dimensions, in this case the packaging, are being consulted to make a decision. In addition, the majority of wine consumers are rather laypeople that derive little value from the information provided on the label. Within this bachelor thesis several external dimensions that increase wines' sales should be evaluated in dependance of the consumer's level of expertise.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B7. Brand activism — can it be successful to take a stand on socio-political issues? (already assigned)

Brand activism represents an emerging marketing strategy that has become incrementally popular in practice. Companies take a public and unequivocal stand on polarizing socio-political issues in order to



appeal to a specific group of consumers. These companies acknowledge the importance of a company not only to generate profit, but also to substantially contribute to society. Well-known examples are Nike, standing up against racism (Colin Kaepernick), Patagonia, advocating pro-environmental actions, and Procter & Gamble, who stand up for feminism (Always) and against toxic masculinity (Gillette). They launched advertisements that convey a clear message by taking a side on a specific socio-political issue. The practice of brand activism has been assumed to be effective if consumers perceive it to be authentic. Only recently, in the wake of the BLM protests, many companies published statements against racism to publicly participate in the political debate. In the scope of this bachelor thesis the student should examine, using examples from practice, how companies managed to successfully apply brand activism as well as potential pitfalls and how they overcame those. The student should evaluate whether brand activism can be a useful strategy and possibly yield a competitive advantage over neutral firms, that stay out of the political debate.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B8. Public funding – prerequisite or obstacle for big screen success?

While most US blockbuster movies are financed by a single production company, European productions usually rely on a multi-source financing strategy. Public funding plays a major role in this. In Germany, for example, 18 different federal and state film funds provide over 300 million euros annually to support the creation, production, and distribution of feature films. However, the impact of public funding on the national film industry is controversial and many productions do not generate significant profits. The aim of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive overview of existing marketing research on the role of public funding in the commercial success of motion pictures. The candidate collects and analyses current research findings and derives a conceptual framework to illustrate the underlying link between the findings.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B9. Brand extensions across products – The case of games and filmed entertainment

For entertainment products such as films, video games or books, a compelling story is essential to convince audiences. To keep their attention, producers often tell stories that revolve around the same characters and even cross media boundaries. Prominent examples include the LEGO video game series, which retells various stories such as that of The Avengers, or the Harry Potter films, which are in turn, of course, book adaptations. Marketing research has recognized these products as brand extensions and provides scientific evidence that brand extensions bring a competitive advantage to many products. However, for entertainment industry professionals, this finding is somewhat controversial. Therefore, this thesis aims to identify relevant research findings regarding crossover brand extensions from video games to filmed entertainment and vice versa. The candidate gathers marketing research, identifies relevant data sources to study crossover brand extensions, and derives a visual model that identifies both research gaps and crucial management insights for entertainment marketing as well as marketing in other industries.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



B10. Understanding e-sport marketing

Thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic, the video game industry has likely exceeded its 2020 growth expectations and continues to reinforce its role as an economic force to be reckoned with. But beyond their role as purely recreational product, video games have developed a more serious side: professional, competitive gaming or "e-sports". While for younger generations watching professional video game matches has become a popular activity, e-sports are still far from the popularity of, say, soccer, basketball, or American football. Accordingly, research on e-sports marketing is sparse. This paper examines the role of e-sports in marketing research, provides a comprehensive overview of existing publications and derives a conceptual framework to classify the research findings.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B11. Reviewing motion picture financing conditions

To obtain sufficient financing for a new film, European production companies rely on funding from multiple sources. In contrast, Hollywood blockbusters are usually financed by a single, wealthy production company. In multi-source financing, public funding plays a major role. Germany in particular is known for its sophisticated funding system with 18 different federal and state film funds that provide over 300 million euros annually for the creation, production and distribution of motion pictures. Of course, that would merely be enough to finance the next Avengers or Avatar film. Whether public funding strengthens the national film industry, however, is debatable. Many productions do not generate significant profits to cover the public expenditure. Therefore, this thesis aims to provide an overview of the role of public funding in the commercial success of feature films. Accordingly, the candidate collects and analyses current research findings and derives a conceptual framework to clarify the underlying relationships between research insights.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B12. Marketing of video games – new frontiers for research

The Covid 19 pandemic gave another boost to the already thriving video game industry. When people had to stay indoors, video games not only provided welcome distraction but also new opportunities for previously offline activities. For example, Epic Games' Fortnite, with its 350 million users, has the scale and reach to host major attractions that span multiple entertainment genres. In April 2020, rapper Travis Scott performed in the world of Fortnite and over 12 million players watched his virtual show. While the entertainment industry has recognized video games as a major source of revenue, entertainment research has been slow to turn to analyzing their market dynamics and potential. Therefore, this paper gathers recent publications in relevant marketing, management, and business journals to derive a visual model that reveals both research gaps and crucial insights for the future of video games marketing.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



B13. Capturing streaming success

As a US\$2.1 trillion industry, entertainment media are centered in the day-to-day lives of most consumers. In the US, for example, physical sales of filmed entertainment and streaming purchases reached US\$30 billion in 2020. In addition to its wide reach, the home video market is dynamic, so it is moving away from one major distribution format to a variety of digital channels. Streaming services now follow different revenue models than the transactional cinema and DVD markets. Thanks to their subscription models, measuring success of individual products has become multilayered. This thesis aims at identifying relevant measures of streaming success. The candidate collects research concerned with digital movie and series marketing and identifies relevant data sources to reliably measure which products could be considered as successful on streaming platforms.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B14. Domestic movie marketing

Since all studios that are considered major industry players are North American companies, the role of the US in the global film market is evident. Although sales of popular films in different countries are highly positively correlated, individual films have also shown strongly diverging ticket sales across the globe. Entertainment research is often based on samples from different national markets and thus also finds divergent measures of success. The aim of this thesis is therefore to provide an overview of film research based on different countries. The candidate creates a comprehensive overview of country-specific film marketing research. Subsequently, the candidate will derive a conceptual model to identify where film success is well researched and where it remains a mystery.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B15. The art of persuasion: as old as mankind

The entire history of our culture is based on persuasion - every discourse comes alive and finds its further development with persuasion. For many decades factors that contribute to the success of persuasion have been researched in science in the context of marketing. This bachelor thesis is intended to provide a literature review of the results of persuasion research and its implications for operational application in today's marketing.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B16. How companies use tiktok for advertising

For companies' social media strategies, Instagram and Facebook are no longer the only relevant channels. Especially in younger age segments, TikTok has become an essential communication and advertising channel. This bachelor thesis is intended to show how companies use tiktok for communication and distribution and what advantages or disadvantages it offers compared to other social media platforms.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer



B17. Talking to things – how smart products changing our lives

“Hey Alexa, start the coffee machine.” With this slogan amazon draw attention to smart coffee machines and their connection to the company's own voice assistants. Digitalization makes it possible for formerly analog devices to become intelligent and smart. This not only offers advantages from the customer's point of view, but also allows companies to gain valuable data about their users. This thesis deals with the development of smart products and the associated advantages and disadvantages from the consumers' and producers' point of view.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B18. Can innovation damage brand equity?

"The ability to innovate decides our fate" said Federal President Roman Herzog in his Berlin speech as early as 1997. Innovations are undoubtedly decisive for humanity and crucial for the survival of the economy. But very few people ask the questions: Is there a level of too much innovation? Can a company innovate too much? Are there disadvantages of innovation for the brand value? And can innovation lead to confusion, frustration or distrust among consumers? The task of the bachelor thesis is to discuss the downside of innovations.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B19. Crowd-Innovation – customer-oriented innovation or searching for ideas with amateurs?

Through the Internet, companies have the power to create value together with customers. But do consumers really know what they want? The bachelor thesis should identify best and worst cases based on a literature analysis of different ways of crowdsourcing. Subsequently, the effectiveness and boundary conditions of crowdsourcing should be discussed.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B20. With eyes, ears and nose – Experience marketing

Customer-oriented services and high-quality products - these company characteristics no longer make outstanding differences today. Good support is often expected, the quality of products comparable to those of competitors. What can resourceful marketers do to seek the attention of their customers in the future? One approach: Experience marketing, which stimulates emotions, senses and dreams of customers. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to give an overview of experience marketing and an outlook on technological and strategic developments that could shape experience marketing in the future.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer



B21. Online vs. Offline: how is our food buying behavior changing?

Rewe, Gorillaz, Edeka - food delivery services are spreading across Germany. This automatically raises the question: Do we buy groceries differently online than offline? There could be major differences, especially in the area of sales promotion: Shelf placement is obsolete online, there are no sweets at the checkout, we don't hear music from the store's speakers. This bachelor thesis is intended to provide a literature overview of studies and papers that have already researched online and offline shopping in the food sector.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer



Master

M1. A qualitative assessment of the drivers for lay people's purchase decisions in the case of the experience product wine.

So called experience or credence products, whose quality and pleasantness can hardly be assessed in advance, take on a special role in the marketing research, since the consumer's decision making can only be based on external factors in the absence of prior experience. One such product is wine. Usually, the consumer does not have the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase and is therefore unknowing about whether he will like it. Thus, the extrinsic dimensions, in this case the packaging, are being consulted to make a decision. In addition, the majority of wine consumers are rather laypeople that derive little value from the information provided on the label. This master thesis aims to uncover the process of how lay consumers decide for a wine to purchase as well as which factors are most prominent in the decision by the means of a qualitative approach.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M2. Success factors of wine bottle labels

Wine is one of the products whose quality and pleasantness can hardly be assessed in advance. These products which are referred to as experience or credence products, take on a special role in the marketing research, since the consumer's decision making can only be based on external factors in the absence of prior experience. Usually, the consumer does not have the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase and is therefore unknowing about whether he will like it. Thus, the extrinsic dimensions, in this case the packaging, are being consulted to make a decision. In addition, the majority of wine consumers are rather laypeople that derive little value from the information provided on the label. In the scope of this master thesis, potential factors of bottle labels driving the product choice will be assessed using a quantitative method.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M3. A quantitative assessment of the evolution of qualitative research in strategic marketing

Qualitative methods are increasingly rare in the marketing literature, despite their importance in the development of concepts. Several renowned researches explicitly have been calling to not neglect this relevance. As an explorative approach, qualitative research is particularly crucial for the generation of theory which can later be statistically tested using quantitative methods. The goal of this master thesis is to shed a light on previous publications on qualitative research in academic journals for strategic marketing (Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science and International Journal of Research in Marketing). The student should provide a comprehensive overview on the qualitative literature and analyze and evaluate its respective and the overall impact within the marketing literature with a quantitative method.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede



M4. Individual preferences for ethical alternatives in the case of joint consumption

When people consume, they often do so with others, be it a movie, a wine, or a vacation. Joint consumption has been researched in different regards already. One question, that hitherto has not been investigated in the context of joint consumption is, whether under social influence consumers have higher preferences for more ethical alternatives, that do not benefit the group, but might even harm it in the case of higher prices, but signal altruism. In the scope of this master thesis the previous questions should be studied with an appropriate method.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M5. Games for free – are free product trials actually helpful?

In December 2018, the Epic Games Store went live during the annual Game Awards ceremony but offered just a handful of games. To grow its customer base, the publisher of popular titles such as Fortnite and Unreal Tournament began giving away one free game per week to its registered users. However, offering free products to attract customers is not exclusive to the ever-growing gaming industry. Since various industries try to attract customers in this way, it is worthwhile for marketing and research to look beyond individual product types and combine insights from different industries. Accordingly, this thesis is dedicated to the influence of free products on the success of platform businesses and individual products. The candidate will conduct a comprehensive literature review on product testing and (video game) marketing and relate the findings for different/specific industries in a conceptual model. Subsequently, the candidate will further investigate the influence of free product tests empirically, either through primary or secondary data, to test, for instance, an effect on product sales of other competing platforms.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M6. Crossover brand alliances – the case of video games

Everything that can be professionally managed is called a brand. Thus, even fictional characters and stories have become big brands over the years (see, for example, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter). When different brands join forces, they form brand alliances. In the entertainment industry, brand alliances break through the boundaries of fictional worlds so that plots and especially characters from independent worlds begin to overlap. Well-known examples from the games industry are “Mario + Rabbids: Kingdom Battle” with the Nintendo brand Super Mario and the Ubisoft brand Rabbids, or “Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe”. The typical goals of brand alliances are to improve brand awareness and image and ultimately to expand the customer base or target audience. However, a crossover project is not automatically successful. For example, fans of Mortal Kombat and DC were disappointed by the crossover title. Similarly, an appearance of Pikachu in the next Gof of War installment would likely deter fans. In the digital age there is much better access to customers and information about their brand preferences, but what are the biggest challenges for crossover projects from a marketing perspective? This paper explores the market potential of brand alliances using the example of crossover video games with the help of existing marketing research and subsequent analyses.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



M7. Finding untapped potentials in e-sports marketing

New Zealand promotes its touristic qualities via Twitch, Aldi positions itself as sponsor of the League of Legends "Prime League", adidas becomes main partner of the German e-sports organization G2 and 23 top football clubs cooperate with Fortnite to promote virtual kits and be present for 350 million users. Besides their status as purely recreational products, video games have developed a more serious side: professional, competitive gaming or "e-sports". While for younger generations watching professional video game matches has become a popular activity, e-sports are still far from the popularity levels of, for example, football, basketball or American football. Accordingly, research on e-sports marketing is sparse. This paper examines the role of e-sports in marketing research, provides a comprehensive overview of existing publications and derives a conceptual framework for classifying the research findings. It then uses data from the e-sports industry to examine current e-sports marketing and business development issues and to analyze strategic opportunities for management.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M8. The changing impact of audience ratings on movie success

As an intangible experience good, no customer can truly know whether they will like a movie prior to its consumption. Thus, many rely on publicly available reviews and ratings by professional or amateur critics to decrease their perceived purchase risk. Whereas such reviews used to be available only in print magazines or on personal recommendation, consumers today have immediate access to a multitude of different evaluations and ratings and can easily contribute themselves. So far, research limited its investigations on the impact of audience ratings on movie success to restricted continuous time frames. Thus, the task of this master thesis is to establish selective data samples from different time periods in order to investigate the changing impact auf audience ratings on movie success and explore recent product rating measures that rely on the active involvement of average consumers.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M9. FOMO and webshops – old but gold?

The scarcity principle has been examined for more than 50 years, but it has not been studied thoroughly in online environments. Time-limited promotions and low stock levels create scarcity and and try to increase the purchase rate. Although these methods are widely known by costumers, they are still used – with success? This master thesis should use online experiments to examine the effectiveness of those scarcity sales-triggers and relate them to the experienced fear of missing out. Experiments with the graphical representation of these trigger-elements could be made too.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

M10. Out of stock and webshops - effects on long-term customer loyalty?

For companies, the constant availability of their goods is essential for generating sales. However, it is not unusual for products to be out of stock in online stores. Especially in the apparel industry, consumers often experience OOS. But how affect a sold-out product the customer relationship? Can OOS also boost consumer interests in a brand? And: Is there a difference in OOS perception based on



the size of the online store? This master thesis aims to answer these questions with the help of quantitative survey or an online experiment.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

M11. Syntax and the illusion of fit

Massimiliano Ostinelli and David Luna present for the first time an analysis of a syntactic change in consumer research and show that this type of linguistic change can influence consumer inferences in important ways. In this master thesis, this extant study should be continued. The goal is to test other product types with this or other syntactic changes for influence. It is also conceivable to extend the study by varying different verbs in order to explore subject bias more systematically. (The original study from April 2021 can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3wT8igV>)

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer