



## Topics for Bachelor and Master Theses for the **Summer Semester 2024** (December 1, 2023)

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### Application

- Your application (in English or German) should include the following contents: A minimum of 5 topic requests with your individual prioritization/ranking of your interest (e.g., B3, B11, B17, B16, B15) including a brief “scientific exposé-style” paragraph outlining why and how you would like to research the topic, an overview of your previous academic performance, a short curriculum vitae, (and optionally your own topic proposal with literature references that we will review to ensure 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](mailto: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.



## Bachelor

### B1. Living in a material world: The role of extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations

Materialism has been well defined in the literature, undergoing a shift from including not only material possessions but also more immaterial forms of consumption. In recent years a rise in luxury and materialistic consumption could be observed while at the same time mindful and minimalistic consumption are gaining importance. This thesis aims to identify underlying psychological principles that play a role in materialistic and minimalistic consumption. The following questions are of particular interest in this context: What role does the self-concept play? How do extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations influence consumer behavior and well-being?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B2. Ethical marketing: The importance of moral and honesty in marketing

Every company wants to win customers, sometimes without regard to the associated costs. In this pursuit, ethical boundaries are often crossed and marketing messages to customers are often untruthful. Instances of this unethical behavior range from the misrepresentation of exhaust emissions by certain car manufacturers to the inaccurate composition claims of products made from recycled ocean plastic. Employing deceptive information to influence customers' purchasing decisions is considered unethical in marketing practices. This thesis aims to conduct a comprehensive literature review on ethical marketing, focusing on the pivotal questions: What role do morality and honesty play in ethical marketing? How can ethical and unethical marketing tactics be differentiated? Do customers actually care?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B3. Materialistic consumption: The meaning of materialism and luxury for consumers

Materialism is the importance that consumers attach to possessions. At the highest level of materialism, such possessions occupy a central place in a person's life. Possession of material goods has long been an important part of human life. Stereotypically, materialism and luxury are perceived to overlap when viewed externally. The aim of this thesis is to show the meaning of materialism for consumers and its development. And to work out the connection between materialistic, luxury and conspicuous consumption. The following questions are of particular interest in this context: Which role does self-esteem play? How do these concepts influence consumers' well-being?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B4. Mindful consumption: From overconsumption to minimalism

Consumers often buy products that they do not really need. Advertising, among other things, constantly suggests to them that the products presented will enrich their lives. Materialists define themselves through their consumption and possessions. In recent years, however, there has been a development away from possessions, within which the concept of minimalism has also gained attention. The aim of this thesis is to create a comprehensive literature review on consumer minimalism, considering the concept of mindfulness. The following questions are of particular interest



in this context: How do mindfulness and minimalism differ from each other? Can mindfulness lead consumers to consume less?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B5. Mindfulness and compensatory consumption: The influence of mindfulness on addictive consumer behaviors

Our world has not only changed considerably in terms of the range of products on offer, it has also become more fast-paced. Consumers are fleeing from everyday stress and their personal problems and are looking to the market for satisfaction. However, this consumption does not necessarily make people happier, but can be addictive (e.g., social media use or shopping) and can affect consumers' overall happiness and even health. The aim of this thesis is to present the different forms of compensatory consumption and their impact on consumers. The following questions are of particular interest in this context: What are the positive and negative consequences associated with compensatory consumption? Can mindfulness serve to disrupt compensatory consumption behaviors?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B6. Can you buy happiness? How consumption affects well-being

Studies have found that people in the fifteenth century were already consuming goods in pursuit of happiness. Consumers have continuous needs and wants and are looking to the market for satisfaction. However, consumption does not necessarily lead to a lasting increase in satisfaction and happiness. The goal of this thesis is to present a comprehensive literature review on the influence of different types of consumption on consumers' well-being. The following questions are of particular interest in this context: What kind of consumption has positive and negative effects on well-being? Which factors influence consumers' happiness?

Supervisor: Friederike Gobrecht

### B7. Consumption of negative experiences: The case of horror movies and games

Horror movies and games are among the timelessly popular genres that are not only consumed at Halloween. Although they deliberately evoke negative emotions such as fear, anxiety or suspense, these media are consumed by people intentionally and sometimes even with pleasure. The question that arises is: Why do people consider such products even though they seem to offer no positive or joyful benefits? The candidate aims to examine these aspects and gain deeper insights into the reasons behind the deliberate consumption of horror films and games. The research could thus reveal not only individual behavior, but also broader societal patterns in dealing with negative entertainment content.

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B8. Influencers' impact on movies: An analysis of movie reviews on social media

Movies have successfully found their place in the wide range of entertainment options that consumers use to effortlessly amuse themselves or simply escape the daily grind. The reviews of professional



critics can have a significant impact on the success of a movie. With the ongoing digitalization trend, movie reviews are now available anytime, anywhere via social media. Although the role of reviews has been extensively researched on various professional websites, marketing research on social media is still comparatively limited. This paper aims to address influencers on social media who specialize in professional or semi-professional film reviews, thus filling a research gap. The candidate summarizes existing research findings and extends them through a corresponding empirical study.

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B9. Recent Insights in entertainment research – Will cinema die?

In recent years, some have proclaimed the end of the era of movie theaters and instead welcomed the emergence of subscription platforms. Digitalization has also had a significant impact on various other industries. Streaming has fundamentally changed the way we consume movies and series. Although research has already examined various aspects of the entertainment industry, the rapid development of the market brings new insights every year. This paper therefore focuses specifically on marketing research in the entertainment sector. The aim is to determine the current status, to analyze in more detail where our gaze should be directed, and to build bridges between the insights gained, especially for the film industry.

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B10. Success factors for film and game adaptations

The video games industry is one of the largest entertainment markets today. It has been common practice for some time for companies to capitalize on the success of their films and develop video games based on them. This trend has also moved in the opposite direction, as exemplified by the Super Mario Bros. movie, the new Avatar game from Ubisoft or the popular Hogwarts Legacy Game. Nevertheless, the success of such adaptations has only been researched to a limited extent. This study aims to examine the potential of movie-game adaptations in more detail and identify possible success factors. There is a need to better understand the dynamics between film and video game and the mechanisms that influence the success or failure of such adaptations. The focus is not only on the economic aspects, but also on the impact on the target group and other factors. A detailed analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the potential and challenges of film-game adaptations.

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B11. This is a men's world? – Different characters in videogames

Video games have successfully integrated themselves into the wide range of entertainment options that consumers turn to for inspiration or simply an escape from everyday life. Today, the video game industry occupies a central position in the entertainment market. Despite this importance, it is noticeable that female main characters are still in the minority in the video game industry. Well-known examples such as Lara Croft, Princess Peach, Ellie from The Last of Us and Claire Redfield from Resident Evil are prominent, but the choice of female main characters is limited. Only a few video games offer the opportunity to create your own (female) character. In this study, the candidate will investigate in depth whether and to what extent the representation of (female) characters in video games has



possibly changed in recent years. A particular focus will be on what impact these changes might have on the video game industry as a whole. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of gender representation in video games and to identify potential implications for the industry.

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B12. Opportunities and risks in live stream marketing

For younger audiences in particular, user-generated video platforms and live streaming (e.g., Twitch) have become indispensable sources of new entertainment content. At the same time, many companies have recognized their value as an effective marketing channel. Nevertheless, marketing research rarely makes use of the diverse data and associated analysis potential offered by performance indicators such as views, likes, shares, comments, followers, subscriber numbers, bits, or average viewers. The topic of sponsorship is also becoming increasingly important, particularly in streaming services. The researcher uses the Twitch platform to examine where this lack of research is particularly pronounced and explores how the data obtained can be used for future studies to support marketing management. What valuable insights could be gained by companies striving to use this generated data effectively?

Supervisor: Pauline Röhr

### B13. “What are we paying for anyway?” - The case of scientific journals and their publishers

In view of the general growing dissatisfaction of scientific journals with the high fees charged by leading publishers such as Elsevier, this bachelor's thesis should examine the business model of publishing houses. Decades ago, the publisher was an important entity in the publishing process (e.g. journals had to be printed and delivered), whereas today articles are uploaded online and found via search engines - so what is the publisher's value proposition that justifies the high fees? In view of the lack of an answer, journals such as the Journal of Neuroimages are turning away from Elsevier. But how does the journal publish now? And what alternatives do journals have to publishing in general? These questions, as well as the existing business model of publishers, should be discussed in this bachelor thesis.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

### B14. Ideology in consumption

“There is no escaping the spectral hand of ideology. Ideology is omnipresent in people's lives and manifests itself as a consumption ideology when consumers buy and use marketplace products, services, and experiences.” (Schmitt, Brakus and Biraglia 2022, 89) This Bachelor's thesis aims to provide a framework on the effect of consciously consuming adherent to one's ideology on consumers, and to delineate it from religious consumption.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede



## Master

### M1. The impact of DIY activities on emotional well-being

This master's thesis should investigate the psychological effects of do-it-yourself (DIY) activities, such as cake baking, as a means of combating loneliness and improving emotional well-being. Do-it-yourself activities, such as baking a cake, might provide a sense of groundedness and thus contribute to greater stability, happiness, and connectedness. Employing an experimental approach, this thesis should explore how DIY activities impact mental health and examine their potential as therapeutic tools in an increasingly isolated world.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

### M2. Expert vs. consumers: Whom do consumers trust more?

Despite extensive research on the impact of expert opinions and word-of-mouth (WOM) on consumer behavior, there are still many unanswered questions in this domain. This Master's thesis will explore the interaction between these factors and their collective impact on industry outcomes such as sales performance and product popularity. The research should employ an experimental approach to investigate the psychological processes that influence the relationship between consumers and expert reviews. By deciphering these interactions, the study aims to provide a detailed understanding of how these elements affect consumer behavior across various product industries.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

### M3. Beyond the self: Self-transcendence and its impact on nonconformist behavior

This Master's thesis aims to explore how self-transcendence, the sensation of unity with the world and the universe, influences individual behavior, particularly regarding nonconformist actions. The study will investigate whether individuals experiencing a state of self-transcendence are more likely to exhibit behaviors that do not necessarily align with group conformity. Through an experimental study, this thesis seeks to understand how experiences of self-transcendence affect decision-making and social interactions, with a specific focus on conformity and group dynamics.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

### M4. Inspiration or intimidation? Investigating the impact of online transformation videos on learning motivation

This Master's thesis aims to explore the impact of online videos that document skill progression, like learning to play the piano over 100 days, on an individual's motivation to engage in self-learning. It questions whether viewers are more likely to be inspired to start learning due to these demonstrations, or if they adopt a mindset that the ease of learning portrayed may devalue the effort required, thus deterring them from trying. Through experimental methodology, this study will assess the motivational effects of such transformation videos on the willingness to initiate and commit to a new skill.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer



### M5. Together online: 'With Me' videos and their psychological effects

This Master's thesis should investigate the effects of 'With Me' videos, a genre encompassing activities such as studying, eating, and daily routines. It aims to analyze how these videos influence viewer motivation, learning, and feelings of social connection. The study should delve into the role these videos play in creating a sense of virtual companionship, potentially mitigating loneliness and fostering a sense of community among viewers. The research will focus on understanding the psychological impacts of these videos through an experimental approach.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

### M6. Quantifying synergy – Breaking silos in marketing science

What potentially drives researchers of all kinds is contributing to the expansion of knowledge and therefore adding to a better understanding of the world we live in. Despite management and marketing being rather practice-oriented subjects, the criticism prevails that academic output is often disconnected from the real-world. Even within the discipline, different strands of research formulate their impression of silos within marketing that lack substantial transfer. Qualitative consumer research primarily aims to understand consumption habits in order to develop theories. Quantitative research tests theories of relationships statistically. Ideally, the two should work together to achieve better productivity in the development of knowledge, but do they? In this Master's thesis will examine the interplay of qualitative and quantitative research in assess the extent to which the field of marketing is realizing its full potential. So how far do qualitative findings inspire subsequent quantitative testing?

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

### M7. Byte Brawls: The Role of Spectators in the digital Colosseum

Anonymity and distance are thought to be contributors to the rough tone in heated discussions online, that sometimes miss the point of articulating one's view on a specific topic, but rather serve as an outlet for rage. Other commentators claim to read the comment sections just for that matter, to entertain themselves, while companies struggle to implement regulations that still allow for an informal exchange of arguments but prevent their platforms from being filled with aggression and hostility. This Master's thesis should study the role of spectators and elaborate on their motivations to engage as catalyzers or mediators in form of a netnography.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

### M8. Tracing patterns of consumption ideologies

Given the omnipresence of ideology in every person's life, any choices consumers make within the marketplace can never be independent of it. Such consumption manifests itself, for example, as political or status-based. Most academic work on consumption ideology focuses on specific contexts to the exclusion of integrating these findings into an overarching concept of consumption ideology. In order to gain a better understanding, it is relevant to explore the patterns from which these consumption domains emerge, which it the aim of this Master's thesis.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede





### M9. Brand backstabbers: Reconciliation when allies become adversaries

Consumers act within the marketplace consciously and unconsciously under the influence of ideologies. Even the simple decision of buying a cup of coffee is imbued with implicit ideology, as the decision in favor of a particular coffee shop and the milk type is based on consumerist ideas and ideals. Brands might embrace such desires and shape their profile accordingly to revolt against certain practices in an industry on the one hand and appeal to certain consumers on the other. However, the narrative often takes an unexpected turn when these revolting brands are eventually sold out to those established companies they claimed to oppose, as exemplified by Ankerkraut, triggering profound disappointment among loyal customers. Likewise, these brands also mature and may eventually become established brands themselves. Hence, to what extent do consumers actually hold expectations for consistency in a brand's values and practices? And which cognitive and behavioral strategies do consumers use to reconcile with the brand or to resolve the perceived dissonance between the brand's identity shift and their personal preferences for the products themselves?

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

### M10. My marketing master's thesis' incorporeal assistant? Employing AI in bibliographic research

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 Master's thesis is to shed a light on previous publications of qualitative research in academic journals for strategic marketing (International Journal of Research in Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research and Journal of 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 using artificial intelligence (AI).

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

### M11. Exploring the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing bibliography production in marketing

Bibliographies play a crucial role in academic research, facilitating the identification and the understanding of the impact of relevant scholarly publications. However, the manual process of creating bibliographies can be time-consuming and sometimes error prone. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) may present opportunities to increase the efficiency of research, thus also the efficiency of bibliography production and enhance their overall quality. This Master's thesis aims to investigate the various ways in which AI can contribute to automate the process of collecting, organizing, and maintaining bibliographic data, as well as how it can enhance the accuracy and relevance of bibliographic information, ultimately benefiting both researchers and the academic community. One or more scientific marketing journals serve as a use case.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede