



Topics for Bachelor and Master Theses for the **Winter Semester 2022/23** (May 23, 2022)

Content

Application	1
Bachelor.....	2
Master	7

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.



Bachelor

B1. Publishing in science - from independent journals and money-seeking publishers

The publication process of science in a nutshell: Scientists do research, write articles, submit them to a journal and improve them on the (free) advice of reviewers in several rounds. After this process, the currently elected editor of a journal (also a scientist who does this voluntarily) decides which manuscripts are published. Once the paper is subsequently published, the publisher holds out its hand to scientists or the thousands of universities who want access. How valuable is the publisher in this process anyway? To what extent does the publisher still have a right to participate in this process? Would a publisher-free academic landscape be conceivable? This bachelor thesis aims to shed light on the business model and relevance of scientific publishers.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B2. From crosschannel to omnichannel – How technical progress is shaping retailing

Digitalization has greatly changed the nature of retailing over the last two decades. While customers used to visit physical shops to buy products, they now have a variety of ways to engage with companies: Online shops, apps, telephone, or social networks - to name a few. This introduction of additional touchpoints has profoundly changed the relationship between customers and companies, leading to more complex user journeys than before. For example, a customer may search for a product in channel A, buy it through channel B and make a return through channel C. It is therefore a great challenge for companies to develop a channel strategy in which processes interlock and customers find their way around. The task of this thesis is to identify success factors from existing channel literature and to synthesize the results into an overview. From this, recommendations for a multi-channel strategy are to be derived.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B3. Talking to things – How smart products change our lives

“Hey Alexa, start the coffee machine.” With this slogan Amazon drew 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

B4. Reviews in the context of online shopping - Five stars for trustworthiness?

Product reviews have become an instrument used by online retailers to strengthen customers' trust in a product. Reviews can be multimedia (e.g., pictures, videos) or based on social rankings that identify particularly frequent reviewers as experts. Although it is widely known that companies abuse reviews to take advantage of their positive impact, they attract a lot of attention from customers. Tech retailers, such as Saturn, display online reviews on digital price tags on the physical sales floor – but



what makes reviews so important? What are the factors that can convince customers? Researchers have studied reviews as part of the WOM literature and have come to assessments about what makes reviews more credible than others and what customers look for.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B5. How loneliness changes our consumer behaviour

Loneliness has not only been a social problem since the Covid19 pandemic. Contrary to common belief, loneliness is a growing phenomenon that also affects younger people between the ages of 18 and 29. The social consequences are profound. As a result of increasing experience of loneliness, the UK has created the post of Loneliness Minister in 2018, one of many examples of how loneliness brings about structural changes in society. Psychological literature has already addressed the causes and effects in depth, while the impact on consumer behaviour is scarce in marketing literature. This bachelor thesis aims to provide an overview of the effects of loneliness on consumer behaviour and to extract future research approaches.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B6. Rankings and their influence on consumer decision-making

Decision-making is subject to indescribable social influences. For example, consumers often base their consumption decisions on the opinions of others: whether in film, music or literature, customer ratings, sales figures or rankings are used as an aid to decision-making. The striving for conformity as well as individuality plays an important role. The influence of rankings on decision-making and which psychological behavior patterns are activated in the process should be examined more closely in the context of this bachelor thesis. In the context of experience goods, a literature review on the influence of rankings should be given.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B7. Success factors for research articles in strategic marketing – Top 20 of the Journal of Marketing

What you might think to be boring at first glance, can actually be seen as a dive to the core of research in marketing. This thesis' title may not spark high initial interest but upon a closer examination, this thesis attempts to capture what really drives progress in science, which is central to advance our understanding of the world 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 gain importance in academic research? What issues do they address? What type of articles are they? The goal of this bachelor thesis is to provide a 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



B8. Success factors of research articles in consumer behavior – Top 20 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 a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the most successful articles in the Journal on Marketing to give an answer to the questions posed. At first glance, this thesis' title may not spark high initial interest but upon a closer examination, this bachelor thesis attempts to capture what really drives progress in science, which is central to advance our understanding of the world of marketing.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B9. Advertising the mundane

#MySkinMyWay is Gillette Venus' new take on advertising their female razor framing the mundane act of shaving to be an emancipatory act. By doing so, they may speak to the Zeitgeist of a large part of their target group, who are now inspired to celebrate the act of shaving as a way of manifesting their independence in the privacy of their bathroom. This bachelor thesis should examine the mechanism and effects of attaching greater societal meaning to everyday private tasks as well as its potential for other everyday products theoretically.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B10. Rhymes in advertisements

"Haribo macht Kinder froh und Erwachsene ebenso" — a slogan that is well-known to Germans across all ages. The popular jingle may even start playing in our head hearing the phrase. Rhymes are a commonly used linguistic device in advertisements, then as now. The question is, how several studies report its effect on advertisement and brand recall as well as brand attitude. This bachelor thesis should provide an overview on the different effects of rhymes in advertisements.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B11. Reverse psychology in marketing: "we support your choice, no matter if it's against us"

A seemingly popular way of contemporary advertising is refraining from effusively praising the product but rather appealing to the consumer's rationality in knowing what's best for himself. Hair removal is advertised to be a deliberate own choice by a company aiming to sell razors and fast fashion brands advise against impulse buying and remind to make intentional purchases on Black Friday for example.



In the scope of this bachelor thesis extant relevant literature should be revised to develop a theoretical framework of possible effects of such anti-marketing.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B12. Consumers' belief in free will

People attribute a differing degree of self-accountability to their behavioral choices. The question of free will has been a matter of discussion for millennia and at least to some degree, the ability of the individual to make conscious decisions is assumed. As such, the German Federal Constitutional Court derives the principle of guilt from the assumption of freedom of choice. These conscious behavioral choices include decisions within the marketplace. As consumers engage in the market place their perception of the degree to which they are in charge of the decisions they make matters considerably to stakeholders such as companies and policy makers. Within this bachelor thesis, the student should compile a comprehensive overview on the literature on free will in the field of marketing and psychology.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B13. YouTube as a data source in marketing research

For younger audiences, user generated video platforms and live streaming have become indispensable as source for new entertainment content. Likewise, many companies have recognized their value as marketing channels. Yet marketing research seldomly relies on their data and the entailed potential for analyses provided by performance indicators such as views, likes, shares, comments, follows, subscriber numbers, bits or average viewers. Therefore, the candidate collects marketing research that employs either YouTube as a data source to examine where this lack is especially prevalent and how the created data could be employed for future studies that help marketing management. What might be the best learnings for companies trying to utilize YouTube data?

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

B14. The impact of stars on video game success

The multiplayer shooter Call of Duty offers famous playable avatars such as Sylvester Stallone's Rambo or Snoop Dogg. Similarly, Hollywood stars such as Keanu Reeves (Cyberpunk 2077), Kristen Bell (Assassin's Creed), Norman Reedus (Death Stranding), or Samuel L. Jackson (GTA San Andreas) have lent their virtual ego to video games. From a marketing perspective, popular actors can serve as product success drivers in various ways. However, the involvement of star actors/actresses on game success has not received a lot of attention. This study therefore examines the marketing potential of stars by collecting both research on the impact of stars on motion picture success as well as identifying transferrable research for video games.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



B15. Twitch as a data source for marketing research

Especially for younger audiences, user generated video platforms and live streaming have become indispensable as source for new entertainment content. Likewise, many companies have recognized their value as marketing channels. Yet marketing research seldomly relies on their data and the entailed potential for analyses provided by performance indicators such as views, likes, shares, comments, follows, subscriber numbers, bits or average viewers. Therefore, the candidate collects marketing research that employs either Twitch as a data source to examine where this lack is especially prevalent and how the created data could be employed for future studies that help marketing management. What might be the best learnings for companies trying to utilize Twitch data?

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



Master

M1. Fear of missing out the perfect room? The scarcity principle on hotel platforms

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 try to increase the purchase rate, especially on hotel booking platforms like *booking.com*. Although these methods are widely known by costumers, sales trigger like “only 4 rooms left” or “at your booking dates only a few rooms left” still appear there. This master thesis should use online experiments to examine the effectiveness scarcity sales-triggers in the context of the hotel industry and relate them to the experienced fear of missing out.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

M2. The effect of the background in product pictures

The visual representation of products is a central element of online shops. Companies use pictures with models, product photographs or renderings to bring customers closer to the product. Besides the differences in the form of presentation, the background is even decisive for perception. Following the study by Yoo and Kim (2014), the master's thesis should deal with the question of whether product images in natural environments influence consumer response in the context of the cosmetics industry. Alternatively, the influence of rendered product photos in contrast to real photographs on consumer reaction can be investigated. For this purpose, an online experiment should be carried out to record the behavior of test persons in different scenarios.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

M3. The color of loneliness

The properties of colors are important for their perception in marketing. For example, darker products are perceived as hierarchically superior to their lighter versions because they signal dominance to consumers. On the other hand, consumer traits also have an impact on their perception: if people with a dependent self-concept tend to appreciate color harmonies, people with an independent self-concept perceive objects as discrete and disconnected and pay less attention to color harmonies. Studies have shown that color orientation of retail shops affects the well-being of lonely and socially excluded people. How colors affect lonely consumers in other areas such as advertising or product design should be explored in this master thesis.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

M4. Consumers' belief in free will

People attribute a differing degree of self-accountability to their behavioral choices. The question of free will has been a matter of discussion for millennia and at least to some degree, the ability of the individual to make conscious decisions is assumed. As such, the German Federal Constitutional Court derives the principle of guilt from the assumption of freedom of choice. These conscious behavioral choices include decisions within the marketplace. As consumers engage in the market place their perception of the degree to which they are in charge of the decisions they make matters considerably



to stakeholders such as companies and policy makers. In the scope of a master thesis consumer's ideas about their free will with regards to consumption decisions should be explored by means of a qualitative inquiry.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M5. Advertising the mundane

#MySkinMyWay is Gillette Venus' new take on advertising their female razor framing the mundane act of shaving to be an emancipatory act. By doing so, they may speak to the Zeitgeist of a large part of their target group, who are now inspired to celebrate the act of shaving as a way of manifesting their independence in the privacy of their bathroom. This master thesis should examine the mechanism and effects of attaching greater societal meaning to everyday private tasks as well as its potential for other everyday products empirically.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M6. The burden of choice and the gratitude for assistance

Consumers feel overwhelmed the greater the range of options. In addition, they might lack the necessary expertise to assess a product's ingredients - as with skincare products - and hence its usefulness in meeting their personal needs. Some brands offer explanations of used chemical ingredients for example, which may assist the consumer in educating himself and perhaps making a better-informed choice. In the scope of this master thesis, the student should investigate whether such consumer education is ultimately benefitting the educating company at all.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

M7. Human actors in virtual words – Stars as a driver of video game success

The recently deceased actor Michael K. Williams (The Wire, Lovecraft Country, 12 Years a Slave) made one of his last performances in Battlefield 2042, a multiplayer shooter game. Similarly, famous Hollywood stars such as Keanu Reeves (Cyberpunk 2077), Kristen Bell (Assassin's Creed), Norman Reedus (Death Stranding), or Samuel L. Jackson (GTA San Andreas) have lent their virtual ego to video games. The inclusion of such digital actors emphasizes an ongoing convergence of games and movies. The latter also have strongly adopted motion capture and other technologies to digitize their actors. From a marketing perspective, popular actors serve as product success drivers in various ways. However, while many movie success factors have also received attention as drivers of video game sales, the involvement of star actors/actresses has not been considered in marketing research. This thesis aims to close this gap. First, the candidate will theoretically examine how and if stars might drive game sales as part of a literature review, focusing on the impact of stars on motion pictures, then, they will empirically analyze how strong this influence could be.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



M8. Public funding and motion picture success

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. How does production subsidy influence the final budget? What influences total subsidy figures? Can subsidies increase box office success? Which subsidy forms have more impact? To tackle such questions, the candidate gathers publicly available data on public funding and movie success to derive a respective quantitative analysis.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber