

MKT 710 Research Seminar in Spring 2019 (FSS 2019)

Administration of Seminar: Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Christian Homburg
Marcus Theel, M. Sc.

Basic Literature for all Topics:

Homburg, Ch. (2017), Marketingmanagement: Strategie – Instrumente – Umsetzung – Unternehmensführung, 6th Ed., Wiesbaden.

Homburg, Ch., Kuester, S., Krohmer, H. (2012), Marketing Management: A Contemporary Perspective, 2nd Ed., Maidenhead.

Please note:

Seminar papers can be prepared in **English or in German**. You can choose the language of your seminar paper after the topics have been assigned.

A. Marketing Strategy and Management

1. Money, Power, and Love: Chief Marketing Officers in Top-Management Teams

Chief Marketing Officers are relevant for firms' marketing strategy and capabilities. However, it remains open to research how CMOs relative wages and power affect relationships with other top-management team (TMT) members and performance of the firm's market-based assets, e.g. customer equity, brand equity, and customer satisfaction. The goals of this seminar paper are (1) to review and systemize relevant academic literature on TMT power and TMT wage dispersion with a focus on CMOs, (2) identify contingency factors and consequences of TMT wage dispersion on top managers' (i.e., CMO's) power and relationships within the TMT, and (3) outline future research directions.

2. Marketing Organization – A State of the Art Review

Nowadays, firms are forced to change their structures, processes, and practices to keep up with increasingly digital and fast changing market environments. Consequently, the contemporary marketing organization is subject to major changes and questions arise as to marketing's future role within the firm. Against this background, the goals of this seminar paper are (1) to provide a systematic overview of academic results on marketing organization and (2) to identify related trends and research gaps.

3. The role of supply chain management in marketing

Supply chain management has been researched for a long time in research fields such as logistics or information systems. However, there is also a strong link between supply chain management and marketing. Therefore, the objectives of this seminar paper are (1) a systematic review of how supply chain management and marketing are interrelated, and (2) an evaluation of a stronger supply chain integration into marketing.

4. The effects of digitalization on relationship value in business-to-business markets

Business relationships have been a key focus of marketing for decades. However, change processes such as the digital transformation have deeply changed the supplier behavior as well as the customer needs and expectations. Therefore, the objectives of this seminar paper are (1) a systematic literature review on the topic of relationship value in B2B markets, and (2) the identification of how relationship value within buyer-seller relationships has changed through digitalization.

5. Firm Capabilities in Marketing Research

As a result of digital transformation, firms face severe challenges to keep up with increasingly complex and fast changing market environments. To cope with these challenges, firms are not only forced to reconfigure existing capabilities (e.g., new product development). In fact, firms need to develop new

distinctive capabilities (e.g., social media marketing) to gain and sustain competitive advantage. Against this background, the goals of this seminar paper are (1) to provide a systematic overview of academic results on firm capabilities in marketing research and (2) to identify related trends and research gaps.

B. Consumer Behavior

6. Consequences of consumer self-confidence

The rise of the internet drastically changed the consumer's role in the market place. Due to the vast amount of available and easily accessible information, consumers are evermore empowered to make purchase decisions. However, especially when facing complex decisions, consumers used to rely on expert advice. Has this pattern changed or do the powerful still listen? The goals of this seminar paper are (1) to provide a systematic overview of research on consumer information search, advice seeking behavior and adherence to expert-advice and (2) to outline future research directions.

7. Consumer-Company Identification: the Social Identity Approach

The central assumption of the social identity approach is that individuals define themselves in terms of collective attributes of the groups to which they belong. Companies can successfully use this approach in order to build strong relationships with consumers by increasing consumer-company identification. The goal of this seminar paper is to provide an overview of the existing research on the key determinants and consequences of consumer-company identification in the marketplace.

8. Consumer Self-Construal as a Perspective for Cross-Cultural Consumer Research

Self-construal represents the extent to which an individual is viewed as being separate from or interconnected with others. Cross-cultural evidence suggests that these two aspects of self vary across cultures – namely, Westerners tend to focus on the personal self, whereas Easterners tend to focus on how the self is related to other people. This finding can be especially useful for explaining cultural differences in consumer behavior. Therefore, the goal of this seminar paper is to deliver an overview of existing cross-cultural research on the role of individual's self-construal in consumer behavior.

C. Sales Management

9. Individual Differences in Individuals' Networking Behaviors

Top managers, sales people and business students differ in their approaches to build and maintain their personal and professional networks. The list of benefits of a strong network is long. The goals of this seminar paper are (1) to review and systemize relevant academic literature on individual differences in networking behaviors, (2) find commonalities and differences with regard to personal and professional networks, and (3) outline future research directions.

10. Are Group Incentives Fair? – An Analysis Based on the Theory of Justice

Due to the extensive use of group incentives within the context of workforce motivation, it is interesting for researchers to investigate this topic in order to derive strategic advice for company managers nowadays. However, before an incentive system can be used appropriately, one should ask oneself the question: Is this really fair? What are the basic assumptions of the so called Theory of Justice that should be considered in order to confirm this question? These and other issues should be addressed in this seminar paper to better understand the underlying processes of current incentive systems.

The aims of this term paper are to (1) define and clarify the underlying terms and concepts such as group incentives and Theory of Justice, (2) to work out the conditions for a fair incentive system based on the assumptions of the Theory of Justice, and (3) deduce some conclusions about the appropriate application of these conditions within in the context of an appropriate incentive system.

11. Where are the gaps? State-of-the-art review regarding the need for research in the context of sales team steering

In times of increasing cooperation within the business environment as well as the empowerment of internal working teams within the sales context it is highly relevant to examine effective steering instruments of these teams in order to achieve desired management goals. Whereas e.g. organizational support and work task structures have been extensively researched there is still a lack of research into suitable steering instruments for sales teams that should be investigated. In order to provide a comprehensive state-of-the-art review of the academic literature the main objectives of this term paper are to (1) give an overview and classification of different team steering

instruments within the sales context, (2) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different types by consulting current studies in that field of research and summarize the current research gaps in that area of research, and (3) derive suggestions for further studies in future research.

D. Customer Relationship Management

12. Customer retention in the digital age – a state of the art review

Prior literature has shown that customer retention is a highly profitable part of customer relationship management. In the digital age, however, customers have become empowered in many ways and are exposed to nearly endless options and almost complete transparency with regard to products and services. The digitalization therefore provides both opportunities and challenges to businesses. This seminar thesis consists of a systematic literature review on the state of the art of customer retention management with a focus on customer relationships in the digital age.

13. Customer win-back – bringing lost customers into focus

Lost customers have increasingly attracted the attention of firms, resulting in broad win-back initiatives and large investments. In times where marketing functions face a rising demand for greater accountability and where competition is strong, firms cannot afford to leave lost customers out of mind. Particularly in non-contractual business, digitalization comes with the opportunity to identify previously anonymous customers and to determine which customers have actually stopped being customers. The goal of this seminar thesis is to summarize existing literature on customer win-back with an outlook on possible future developments and business practice.

14. Multiplex Business Networks: The Many-Faced Relationship

Inter-firm relationships can occur simultaneously through multiple types of ties. For example, at the same time two firms might be supplier and customer, collaborate on R&D, have intertwined managerial and supervisory boards and compete for the same customers. The goals of this seminar paper are (1) to review and systemize relevant academic literature on multiplex business relationships, (2) identify sources to collect data on multiplex business networks, and (3) outline future research directions.

E. Market Research Methods

15. Experimental methods in consumer research – State of the art

Experimental research designs allow to gain insights into a wide variety of business problems, e.g. by generating a deeper understanding of consumer behavior. Nevertheless, experimental methods have a relatively low penetration into market research practice. The aim of this seminar paper is to (1) systematically display the basics of experimental methods [2] provide an overview of the application potentials of experiments, and (3) outline the state-of-the-art of conducting experiments in consumer behavior research.