

Chair of Sales & Services Marketing –
Prof. Dr. Florian Kraus

Release of the Topics for the Seminar Thesis MKT 740
Spring Semester 2019

Dear students,

Below, you can find the seminar topics offered by the Chair of Sales & Services Marketing in Spring Semester 2019. The topics can generally be worked on in English as well as in German (if not stated otherwise).

No.	Topic
1	Search Engine Marketing in Mobile Environment (English only) Search engine marketing has been very popular in the last decade. Many companies give ads on websites such as Google and Facebook. Companies bid to keywords to take places in certain squares on the webpage. Although SEM has been studied deeply, the literature is not rich when it comes to SEM on mobile devices. This study focuses on consumer reaction to search engine ads on mobile devices.
2	Device Attachment and Purchasing Channel Loyalty in Online Retailing (English only) People tend to develop a psychological attachment to their mobile devices because of some characteristics of mobile devices. This project aims to find out if this device attachment ends up with purchasing channel loyalty.
3	To bundle or not to bundle: On the strategic use of bundling for reducing consumer guilt The main purpose of this seminar thesis is to summarize the existing research about self-regulation and consumer guilt. Furthermore, the impact of product bundling of multiple hedonic products on consumers' feelings of pre- as well as post-purchase guilt should be discussed. Preferably, at least one of the on this review developed hypotheses is tested empirically.
4	"It's all about the timing": The role of anticipated versus reactive consumer guilt Based on an extensive literature review, the purpose of this seminar thesis is to compare the strength and role of potential influences of experiences of guilt prior to or post purchase decisions on consumer decision making. Furthermore, hypotheses regarding the influence of anticipated guilt on reactive guilt (and vice versa) should be derived.
5	Stockpiling and Flea Market Apps (English only) Flea market apps such as Shpock and Letgo have become very popular lately. People can sell what they do not need any more as well as they can sell brand new products that they buy on big sales/discount events. This study focuses on how these flea market apps affect the sales during and after big sales/discount events.
6	Persuasion of Advertisements with Guilt Appeals (English only) The purpose of this seminar topic is to investigate the persuasion role of guilt appeal in advertisement. Ideally, the role of different kinds of consumer guilt should be discussed. Examples of ads with those guilt types should be given.

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7	<p>The Role of Ambient Music in Consumer Behavior (English only)</p> <p>Ambient music is widely used in shops in order to stimulate consumers' purchase intention. It is also used as a method to reduce the perceived waiting time. Therefore, the purpose of this seminar topic is to discuss the impact of ambient music on various kinds of consumer behavior. In the paper, a specific or several kinds of consumer behavior could be discussed.</p>
8	<p>Negativity Bias: Why Does Bad Experience Hurt Overall Satisfaction So Much? (English only)</p> <p>Negativity bias refers to the stronger impacts of negative events than positive events. According to previous research, people would expect negative events to be more likely to happen and think negative events have stronger impact than negative ones. Therefore, the purpose of this topic is to review relevant literature on negativity bias and develop own hypotheses.</p>
9	<p>Self-Other Differences in Attributing Positive & Negative Events (English only)</p> <p>When people experience an event, they try to find a reason for it. Previous research shows that people attribute differently when they experience positive and negative events. The purpose of this seminar topic is to review relevant literature and describe the phenomenon with previous studies.</p>
10	<p>Predicted Memory Consumption and the Theory of Hot-Cold Empathy Gaps</p> <p>The aim of this seminar paper is to empirically examine the proposition that consumers overestimate their consumption of memories (i.e., photographs) by applying the theory of hot-cold empathy gaps. Further downstream consequences should be discussed.</p>
11	<p>First Day Effect for the New Product Possession (English only)</p> <p>When someone own a product, the perceived value of that product is higher for the owner. This is called "endowment effect". I theorize that this effect is even more powerful when the owner buys the product on the day the product is launched or by preorder. This means that when a customer owns a product on the day it is launched, the customer will think that this specific product s/he owns is more valuable than the other same products. This project is composed of new product marketing, endowment effect, and time inconsistency.</p>
12	<p>In-store Advertisement In Online Stores (English only)</p> <p>Research has shown that in-store advertisement could be very effective to increase sales and loyalty. Many stores (especially grocery stores) apply to this strategy that they increase in-point sales among many others. In-store advertisement is a strategy that online stores can apply as well. Although many online stores advertise their brands and products in their "stores" and take advantage of this strategy, the researchers have studied this stream poorly. In this paper, we will seek the effects of in-store advertisement in online stores as well as we compare these effects with the effects of in-store advertisement in brick and mortar stores.</p>
13	<p>Sales Channel Loyalty and Channel Migration (English only)</p> <p>Some customers could prefer to use only a specific channel for their purchases and develop a channel loyalty in time. This could decrease the profit of the company in the long term because multi-channel purchasers are more profitable although some firms prefer their customers to use only one channel. In this case, the firm could want to lead the customers to one or more specific channels. This is not easy because the customers could show resistance and even leave the firm. The aim of this project is to find out the reasons why customers choose certain channels, why they develop loyalty for these channel and what are the ways to change this preference. This project is composed of multi-channel sales and loyalty.</p>

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14	<p>When Do Loyal Customers Give Up on Their Love Brands? (English only)</p> <p>Love brand (love mark) happens when a customer is in love with the brand. These customers save money, give up on their other expenses, and are excited about the products of their love brands. The price of the products from this brand may be high; but this is fine for the customers, they do not switch to the rival brand. Apple and Starbucks are good examples for love brands. The question is when these customers give up on their love brands and switch to the rival brand based on the innovation level of the rival brand. For example, a better camera that the new Samsung phone offers wouldn't change an Apple addict's mind; however, a flying phone could work. The aim of this project is to find out what characteristics change this decision and how. In the long term, an analytical model could be developed to find out the thresholds.</p>
15	<p>When Alexa Is Wrong (English only)</p> <p>Smart homes are getting more and more important in our daily lives. Amazon Alexa, Google Home, and Samsung Bixby. Although these devices are artificially intelligent, they come with a default software that for example, Alexa makes the purchasing over Amazon. The decision of the artificial intelligence may contradict the customer wishes. This project analyses the potential advantages and disadvantages of artificially intelligent devices and smart homes.</p>
16	<p>The Psychological Value of “1 Second Everyday”: An Empirical Investigation</p> <p>Recently, the app “1 Second Everyday” has introduced a new way of capturing memories. The aim of this seminar thesis is to run an experiment examining the implications of using “1 Second Everyday” on consumer well-being.</p>
17	<p>Direct vs. Conceptual Replication in the Domain of Psychology</p> <p>Given the current replicability crisis in social psychology, replication studies are of growing interest. However, a main distinction can be made between direct vs. conceptual replications. Thus, the aim of this seminar paper is to compare both approaches.</p>
18	<p>What makes a task complex? Discussion of concepts, applications, and limitations</p> <p>Task complexity is an important construct often considered in the investigation of different psychological processes in various fields of research (e.g. effects on consumer behavior). Literature reveals a large body of different definitions and measurements. The aim of this seminar paper is to develop a systematic overview of existing task complexity conceptualizations and to discuss corresponding theoretical fundamentals, appropriate applications and limitations for research and practice.</p>
19	<p>Too much information! How information overload influences consumers' decision making</p> <p>When do consumers suffer from information overload? Previous research shows that the amount of choice alternatives and information attributes influence consumers' decision quality. However, to evaluate the alternatives, information concerning product characteristics must be provided to the customer. The aim of this seminar paper is to review relevant literature and to discuss how information overload can impact consumer decision making.</p>

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20	<p>Price fairness perceptions</p> <p>The use of price comparison websites enables consumers to easily identify the best offer regarding the price, products, and retailers. Thus, a proper investigation of consumers' evaluation of prices is necessary. The aim of this seminar paper is to review relevant literature on perceived (un)fairness and to discuss how and why consumers perceive given prices and price changes as fair or unfair.</p>
21	<p>The role of motivation in online shopping cart abandonment</p> <p>One of four transactions in online stores are abandoned – a phenomenon that is called shopping cart abandonment. To reduce lost orders, managers and researchers ask for explanations why consumers leave the online store without making any purchase although they placed items in their shopping cart before. One stream of research shows that differences in motivational shopping orientation influence the likelihood of consumers' shopping cart abandonment. The purpose of this seminar paper is to review relevant literature on motivational shopping orientation and shopping cart abandonment and to discuss how and when consumers are more (or less) likely to abandon their shopping cart.</p>

For your application, please hand in the following documents as one (!) PDF file:

- List of all seminar topics in prioritized order
- Short motivational letter for the topic of your first priority (not more than ½ page)
- Resume
- “Abitur” certificate
- Certificate of intermediate diploma / Bachelor certificate
- Current transcript of records (Master / Diploma)
- Study plan

Applications for the seminar in Spring Semester 2019 are to be sent **in digital form via e-mail** to **Mengmeng Niu, M.Sc.** (mengmeng.niu@bwl.uni-mannheim.de) and will be accepted from **January 21 – February 1, 2019, 12:00 noon.**