

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

**Release of the Topics for the Seminar Thesis MKT 740**  
**Winter Semester 2019**

Dear students,

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

No.	Topic
1	<p><b>To bundle or not to bundle: On the strategic use of bundling for reducing consumer guilt</b></p> <p>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.</p>
2	<p><b>“It’s all about the timing”: The role of anticipated versus reactive consumer guilt</b></p> <p>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.</p>
3	<p><b>Looking backward vs. Looking forward: The Impact of Queuing (English only)</b></p> <p>Queing is a heating topic in consumer behavior due to its impact on satisfaction of services. Much research has found out that people use not only those who wait behind them as a reference for waiting time, but also those who wait before them. The purpose of this topic is to summarize the existing literature and develop hypotheses which are testable for master thesis.</p>
4	<p><b>Actor-observer bias in attribution (English only)</b></p> <p>For a specific scenario, actors and observers of an action may attribute a certain consequence differently. Research has found that actors are more likely to attribute to internal reasons when it comes to success while observers attribute to external factors. The purpose of this topic is to review current research and explain the different attributions.</p>
5	<p><b>Self-other differences in attributing positive &amp; negative events (English only)</b></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>
6	<p><b>Predicted memory consumption and the theory of hot-cold empathy gaps</b></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>
7	<p><b>When do loyal customers give up on their love brands? (English only)</b></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</p>

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	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.
8	<b>The Value Perception of Reasoned Discounts: An Empirical Investigation</b> Anecdotal evidence suggests that online shops are increasingly giving reason for the provision of discounts (e.g., server issue). Yet, it remains unanswered to what extent giving reason for discounts affects consumer behavior. Thus, the purpose of this seminar thesis is to examine the impact reasoned discounts can have on consumer decision making.
9	<b>The impact of cross- and up-selling recommendations on consumer behavior</b> Consumers are provided with an increasing amount of information resulting e.g. from an increasing amount of products sold in an ever-increasing variety. Previous research finds that this might have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Thus, this paper focuses on cross- and up-selling recommendations as one possible variable increasing the amount of information within the buying process and its impact on consumer behavior.
10	<b>Framing effect in consumer behavior (English only)</b> The way of formulating a sentence might lead to different decisions. It has been found that a 10% death rate is not equal to a 90% survival rate and people reacts differently in these two conditions. Therefore, this seminar paper requires a thorough summary for framing effect in the context of consumer behavior.
11	<b>Search Engine Marketing in Mobile Environment (English only)</b> 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.
12	<b>Device Attachment and Purchasing Channel Loyalty in Online Retailing (English only)</b> 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.
13	<b>Stockpiling and flea market apps (English only)</b> 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.
14	<b>When Alexa is wrong (English only)</b> 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.
15	<b>In-store advertisement in online stores (English only)</b> 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.

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<b>16</b>	<p><b>The role of motivation in online shopping cart abandonment</b></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>
<b>17</b>	<p><b>Direct vs. conceptual replication in the domain of psychology</b></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>
<b>18</b>	<p><b>What makes a task complex? Discussion of concepts, applications, and limitations</b></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>
<b>19</b>	<p><b>An investigation on the reliability of difference scores (English only)</b></p> <p>In some research difference scores are used to measure the differences of two measurements. However, some research revealed that the reliability of difference scores is doubtful. The aim of this seminar thesis is to summarize the existing research on the reliability of difference scores and provide implication for marketing research.</p>
<b>20</b>	<p><b>Sales channel loyalty and channel migration (English only)</b></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>

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

- List of 3 seminar topics of your choice in prioritized order
- Resume
- Current transcript of records with grade (Master / Diploma)

Applications for the seminar in Winter Semester 2019 are to be sent **in digital form via e-mail** to **Ewelina Bartella, M.Sc.** (ebartella@bwl.uni-mannheim.de) and will be accepted from **August 19 – August 30, 2019, 12:00 noon.**