

**Bachelor Thesis Topics at the Chair of Marketing & Innovation, Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuester –  
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**(1) Antecedents and Consequences of Overconfidence Bias in Managerial Decision-Making**

Overconfidence bias is an excessive belief in one's competence or prediction accuracy. From the sinking of the Titanic, the nuclear accident of Chernobyl, or the global financial crisis in 2008, overconfidence bias remains the most frequent bias in managerial decision-making, present across different domains, tasks, and levels of expertise. While this bias is typically associated with negative outcomes such as project or investment failures, in some cases it can also be helpful. For example, overconfidence can lead to faster decisions in situations that require urgency. This thesis aims to (1) investigate the causes and consequences of the overconfidence bias in managerial decision-making, as well as to (2) identify its potential remedies. After a thorough review of the state-of-the-art literature on the topic, the thesis shall (3) conclude with theoretical and practical implications for managerial decision-making.

**(2) Managing Nation Brands in an Increasingly Globalized World**

Nation branding is becoming an increasingly relevant marketing phenomenon. In recent years, the notion of nation branding has captured attention of public policy makers around the world. Due to its novelty, the term still lacks a widely accepted definition and conceptual framework in the marketing literature. Branding of nations entails a variety of dimensions and stakeholders, presumably more than branding of products. Drawing on state-of-the-art literature, this thesis has three goals. First, (1) the thesis should define and clarify the concept of nation branding. Second, (2) it shall discuss different management approaches of nation branding. Finally, (3) the thesis shall derive substantive implications for the theory and practice of nation branding.

**(3) The role of mHealth in promoting consumer wellbeing\***

mHealth describes the use of mobile and wearable devices, such as mobile phones and smart watches, for health services. Often, mHealth includes elements of gamification. Gamification is the use of game-design elements and game principles in non-game contexts. For example, the Apple Watch allows for week-long fitness competitions with friends with the goal to motivate consumers to stay active. The aims of this thesis are to (1) review literature on mHealth content and gamification to understand their effects on consumer motivation and health-related behavior and (2) derive implications for the marketing of mHealth products as well as for the adoption of health-promoting behavior.

**(4) When are patients willing to adopt artificial intelligence in healthcare?\***

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to radically change the healthcare sector. For example, the use of AI in the healthcare context implies long-term cost savings for the healthcare sector. Algorithms already outperform medical experts in a variety of healthcare tasks, such as diagnosing complex diseases or recommending treatments. Nevertheless, little is known about patients' acceptance of AI in healthcare. Initial research findings suggest a resistance of patients to medical AI even in situations in which AI outperforms medical experts. Especially the gap between digital immigrant and digital native patients complicates the adequate design of medical AI for a broad acceptance. The aim of this thesis is (1) to provide a literature overview of the reasons for patients' resistance to medical AI. Based on the findings, (2) implications for marketing research and practice shall be derived regarding the design of medical AI.

**(5) I have to post this! How does the urge to share affect consumers' wellbeing?\***

With the abundance of social media on the one hand, and the opportunity to readily document our lives by sharing pictures, videos, locations, and so much more on the other hand, the question about a healthy balance between being present in the moment versus experiencing it via the display of our smartphone arises. Why do consumers feel the compulsion to share such personal footage and why do have many an urge to publicly post such footage? The aims of this thesis are to (1) review literature on posting and consumption behavior regarding social media as well as sharing behavior between family and friends to identify possible effects of such behavior on consumer wellbeing and behavior. Based on the findings, (2) implications for the marketing of products and services that seek to promote consumers' presence in the here and now shall be derived.

**(6) FOMO versus JOMO: Should we embrace the joy of missing out more?\***

Today's connected consumers are always online and socially connected. While this brings them the joy of a vast amount of information about leisure time options, being connected and informed about all possible options you might be missing out on can also create the fear of missing out (FOMO) and a state of information and opportunity overload. Therefore, some consumers deliberately seek to miss out on options, information, and on being connected all the time, cultivating the joy of missing out (JOMO). The aims of this thesis are to (1) review literature on fear of missing out and joy of missing out to understand their effects on consumer behavior and wellbeing and (2) derive implications for the marketing of products and services that seek to decelerate consumers' lives by promoting JOMO.

**(7) Do smart devices make you look smart?\***

Smart devices like smartphones and tablets are ubiquitous. The number of smartphone users in Germany has grown from 6.3 million in 2019 to 62.6 million in 2021. Smart devices offer access to a vast amount of information, the opportunity to work and socialize, or to a variety of entertainment offers, all of this available at a fingertip. The aims of this thesis are to (1) review literature on the use of smart devices and consumer perceptions to understand how consumers using smart devices are perceived by others. Based on the findings, (2) implications for the marketing and adoption of smart devices shall be derived.

**(8) Does it Pay Off to be Authentic? – A Literature Review on the Importance of Online Content Authenticity and How to Manage It**

Millions of pieces of online content are generated each day. Marketers are advised to leverage this content to cultivate consumers' opinions, Word-of-Mouth (WOM), and purchase decisions. With the mass production of online content and its use as a prevalent consumer practice, internet users have started becoming suspicious about the authenticity of the generated content, especially when it involves product placement. Similarly, integrating advertising in entertainment is often considered to be deceptive. Scientific consensus implies that higher perceived authenticity can only have positive outcomes. The aim of this thesis is (1) to provide a research overview on the reasons why authenticity in online content might be a necessity. Further, (2) theoretical implications regarding content authenticity and implications for social media experts shall be derived.

**(9) Multiple Brand Mentions: Success or Failure in Commercial Online Content?**

With the rise of the Internet and social media worldwide, there is a mass production of commercial online content (user and brand generated). Some commercial online content is well accepted by consumers leading to positive outcomes such as increased brand awareness and purchase intention while other commercial online content might lead to negative outcomes such as negative WOM firestorms. There are many factors that influence the success of commercial content. One of the factors often explored in online marketing research is the level of brand presence in online content. Should the brand be directly or indirectly mentioned? How often should the brand be mentioned? To date, there is no consensus about the optimal level of brand mention in commercial online content. The aim of this thesis is (1) to provide a research overview on the impact of different types and levels of brand mention in commercial online content and (2) to derive managerial implications on how marketing managers should plan, target, and leverage corporate communication in social media regarding brand mentions.

**(10) Online Communities: Participation Motives and Value Creation**

The ubiquity of the internet has accelerated the rapid growth of online communities, which are groups of individuals who share specific interest, such as food, sports, music, or travel. These online communities are usually guided by norms specific to this community and usually overseen by a host. Researchers mainly categorize online communities based on the type of the community host, leading to two categories: brand-hosted and member-hosted communities. Generating and maintaining members' engagement is critical for the community hosts to enhance relationships between the members and gain member loyalty. The aim of this thesis is to provide a literature overview on (1) participation motives for online brand-hosted and member-hosted communities, (2) the potential benefits for the users and the brands for both community categories, and (3) to derive practical implications for both community host types.

**(11) Do I Actually Want to Eat This? – The Role of Marketing in Food Consumption**

Food plays a pivotal role in our lives. At the same time, controlled calorie intake is an increasing trend. Companies frequently style food products to not only look pretty, but also to look healthy and often they do negatively impact food consumption. Thus, recently, food marketing efforts have been criticized as they are believed to increase obesity and overconsumption. Research has also investigated other factor impacting food consumption, including perceived healthiness or nutritional labeling. The aim of this thesis is (1) to consider the literature on food marketing and to provide an overview of the current state of research in this field. The thesis should (2) reflect recent criticism and (3) provide guidance to managers marketing food items and policy makers.

**(12) Did you Get a Badge Yet? – Investigating the Role of Member Badges in eWOM**

The features incorporated in social networking websites keep evolving. The global social networking website Facebook recently added another layer to members' engagement by introducing badges such as "Valued Commenter", "Top Fan", and "Admin" appearing above the names of selected Facebook users. It is, however, not yet clear which effects the use of these badges has on customer-related outcomes, such as community engagement. Are these members viewed as opinion leaders and might they be perceived as more trustworthy by other members? How can their comments and opinions influence other consumers' eWOM? This thesis aims to (1) analyze the existing literature regarding the role of "badges" in digital communication. Based on the generated findings, (2) theoretical implications regarding opinion leadership and (3) implications for social media managers shall be derived.

**(13) Is This Even True? Reliance on Artificial Intelligence\***

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is capable of autonomously processing big data, thereby learning continuously and creating new knowledge. This capability is often used in the form of an advisor system to support humans in decision-making (e.g., financial robo advisors). However, AI is not always error-free and sometimes generates erroneous outcomes. This thesis shall investigate whether users of AI question AI-generated outcomes and to which degree consumers rely on AI. Specifically, by drawing on literature from marketing, information systems, and psychology, this thesis shall (1) provide a systematic overview of consumers' tendency to rely on AI advisor systems and (2) identify research gaps in the literature concerning the application of AI in a marketing context.

**(14) Oops, That Shouldn't Have Happened! The Application of Service Failure Recovery Measures in the Context of Artificial Intelligence\***

Sometimes service interactions do not run as smoothly as intended or they fail altogether, no matter if it's a human-human interaction (e.g., restaurant guest and waiter) or artificial intelligence (AI)-human interaction (e.g., AI voice assistant and customer). Especially scholars from service research have intensively investigated service failures, their consequences, and recovery strategies. However, in the context of AI, it is unclear how companies should address AI failures. Therefore, the objectives of this thesis are (1) to review relevant literature on service failure recovery strategies and (2) to outline which measures may be taken by companies to recover from AI-induced failures. Finally, the thesis shall conclude by (3) deriving future research directions and managerial implications for AI service providers.

**(15) Artificial Intelligence and Ethics – A Consumer Perspective on Ethical Applications of Artificial Intelligence\***

Artificial Intelligence (AI), in the form of chatbots, voice-based assistants, or algorithms, is playing an increasingly important role in people's everyday lives, whether in private, organizational, or industrial environments. However, along with this, concerns are raised regarding the lack of morals or ethics of AI in dealing with consumers. Tay, for example, Microsoft's intelligent chatbot on Twitter, was shut down less than 24 hours after its first tweet due to discriminatory and offensive postings by the chatbot itself. The objectives of this thesis are (1) to review relevant literature on ethical AI applications and (2) to outline the status quo of consumers' perspective on the ethical use of AI in human-AI interactions. In doing so, the opportunities and risks of AI interacting with consumers shall be considered. The thesis shall conclude by (3) deriving future research directions at the crossroads of AI, marketing, and ethics and providing managerial implications for companies offering AI applications.

**(16) Anthropomorphized Algorithms – Can Errors Make Algorithms Seem More Human?\***

“To err is human” is a common saying implying that committing mistakes is normal and can be even expected. But what about technology committing mistakes? This question becomes of particular interest with more algorithms influencing consumers’ everyday lives. Moreover, numerous documented incidents and academic studies have proven that algorithms commit mistakes. However, it remains unclear whether consumers perceive algorithms that err as more human and how errors influence consumers’ subsequent behavior and attitudes about algorithms. Thus, this thesis (1) shall review the literature on erroneous algorithms within the marketing domain as well as the literature on anthropomorphism. Further, (2) the thesis shall evaluate the impact of algorithmic errors on consumers and, specifically, investigate whether errors make algorithms seem more human. (3) Future research directions at the crossroads of erroneous algorithms and anthropomorphism shall be derived.

**(17) Empathetic medical AI – Making artificial intelligence in healthcare compassionate\***

Empathy, i.e., the ability to share another person's feelings by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation, is one of the most important skills physicians have. But as digitization and the COVID-19 pandemic continue, more and more interactions are taking place digitally with medical artificial intelligence (AI) instead of physicians. Already many powerful medical AI applications exist, such as apps for skin cancer detection, psychotherapy, or medical counseling. It is expected that more and more physician visits can be replaced by AI in the near future. But there may also be reservations about medical AI – consumers often see medical AI as cold and do not feel understood by it. A potential solution could be the use of artificial empathy, i.e., designing AI to be able to communicate in an empathetic way. The aims of this bachelor thesis are (1) to provide a systematic literature review on artificial empathy and human empathy in medical interactions. Furthermore, (2) existing applications of artificial empathy in the medical context shall be discussed. Based on the findings, (3) implications for future research and practice regarding the design of medical AI shall be derived.



**(18) Artificial empathy – Making digital customer interactions feel good\***

Empathy is known to play a crucial role in customer-employee interactions and has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. But with advancing digitalization, customers are increasingly facing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools instead of human employees. These AI-based tools (e.g., conversational agents such as HelloFresh's Freddy or ERGO's customer service voicebot) will be the new face of the company towards the customer. To maintain successful customer relationships, managers must decide how to make digital customer interactions empathetic and appealing. While there is already some research on the technical aspects of artificial empathy, i.e., how AI-based tools can be programmed to be empathetic, research on how empathetic AI is affecting consumer behavior is still nascent. The aims of this thesis are (1) to provide a systematic literature review on artificial empathy and human empathy in marketing and service settings. Furthermore, (2) existing applications of artificial empathy in the marketing context shall be discussed. Based on the findings, (3) implications for future marketing research and practice regarding the design of AI-based tools shall be derived.

**(19) Better talk than text? The role of modality on conversational agent adoption\***

Companies are increasingly using conversational agents like chatbots and voicebots for digital customer interactions. Prominent examples are HelloFresh's Freddy, a chatbot that assists with cooking, or ERGO's voicebot, which allows customers to get insurance advice from a bot over the phone. But customers are often reluctant to adopt these new tools. Managers need to decide when they should offer their customers interactions with chatbots, voicebots, or human employees. The aims of this bachelor thesis are (1) to provide a systematic literature review on the role of the modality, i.e., text vs. voice, within digital customer interactions and how modality influences customer outcomes such as AI adoption or customer satisfaction. The findings (2) shall be interpreted in the light of the Media Richness Theory. Finally, (3) implications for marketing research and practice regarding the choice of chatbots vs. voicebots shall be derived.

**(20) Personalized customer-AI interactions – A way to mitigate Algorithm Aversion?\***

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can perform with expert-level accuracy or even outperform human experts in many tasks, such as performance forecasts or medical analyses. Nevertheless, many consumers are reluctant to trust advice from AI and prefer to interact with human experts. This phenomenon is called algorithm aversion. One reason for this phenomenon is that consumers might think that AI neglects their uniqueness. A potential solution might be the personalization of customer-AI interactions. The aim of this bachelor thesis is (1) to provide a systematic literature review on personalization practices of customer-AI encounters. Based on the results, (2) implications for mitigating algorithm aversion as well as implications for future research shall be derived.

**(21) “The World Isn’t Fair, But Why Isn’t It Ever Unfair in My Favor?” – The Impact of Dynamic Pricing on Customer’s Perceived Price Fairness\***

Dynamic pricing is a pricing technique that has gained popularity by companies in the past decades due to the possibility to skim customers’ willingness to pay and, thus, to increase revenues. But what do customers think about dynamic pricing, and do they perceive that it is fair that different customers are offered different prices at different points in time? This thesis aims to (1) provide an introduction into the literature regarding dynamic pricing in general and a critical reflection on the perceived fairness of dynamic pricing specifically. These findings shall be used to (2) contrast dynamic pricing from a customer- and a company perspective. In this context, different kinds of dynamic pricing should be compared and different theories regarding fairness shall be considered. Finally, (3) implications for research and pricing managers, as well as future research directions should be derived.

**(22) “I Apologize That We Did Not Meet Your Expectations” – A Literature Review on Companies’ Response Behavior to Complaining Customers\***

Companies frequently ask their customers to review their products and services online, for example on online review platforms, on companies’ homepages, or via targeted e-mail or telephone surveys. Positive reviews improve average ratings (e.g., Google or booking.com ratings) and reflect positively on the brand’s and company’s image, but what about negative reviews? How should companies respond to them? Should they respond at all? This thesis aims to provide an overview of the literature regarding (1) companies’ complaint response behavior and (2) the effectiveness of several response techniques companies could apply to improve the customer-company relationship. The findings can be used to (3) discuss effective response behavior and to derive implications for research, managers dealing with complaints, and future research.

**(23) “If You Liked Us, Please Leave a Review” – A Literature Review on the Impact of Online Reviews on Customer Behavior\***

Online Reviews are nowadays a very important tool for customers to inform themselves about products and services before a purchase. One obvious question in the online context is, whether it is a good idea to rely on the opinion of unknown others? Do online reviews only provide benefits, or is there a “dark side” of online reviews that customers should be aware of? This literature review aims to (1) provide an overview of the literature on online reviews and their advantages, disadvantages, and consequences for customers. These findings should be used to (2) critically discuss the use of online reviews and to derive theoretical implications and implications for managers of companies running platform-based and traditional business models, as well as to (3) provide an outlook for future research.

**(24) It's Not All Gold That Glitters – A Literature Review on the Dark Sides of New Technologies in Marketing from a Customer Perspective\***

The rise of new technologies in marketing is a research area that is currently on everyone's lips. Such technologies include, for example, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) or genetics for marketing purposes. Recent marketing research discusses new strategic frameworks, marketing innovations, and new data and analytic methods regarding these new technologies. The advantages of employing such new technologies for companies are well- investigated. But how is the use of such technologies perceived by consumers? What do consumers experience when they are confronted with new marketing technologies? This thesis aims to (1) provide an overview of the literature on new technologies in marketing from a customer perspective. In doing so, (2) new technologies should be presented and critically discussed, and a special focus should be placed on potential negative effects of using new technologies. The findings should be used to (3) discuss the use of new technologies in marketing and to derive implications for managers deciding whether to implement new technologies, and for future research.