Consumer Behavior

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1. Just One More and I’ll Be Fine. – Exploring the Drivers and Consequences of Compensatory Consumption Behavior

2. How the Present Shapes the Past: Exploring the Role of Implicit Theories in Dynamic Customer-Firm Interactions

3. Food Aesthetics, Perceived Healthiness and Overeating Behavior

4. Exploring Potential of Using Phenomenology in Marketing Research
**Just One More and I’ll Be Fine. – Exploring the Drivers and Consequences of Compensatory Consumption Behavior**

Despite the rise of connectivity on a global level enabled by digital technologies, people today feel more socially isolated than ever before. Moreover, living in a consumption society has created a space for individuals to compensate, at least in the short term, for some of the things they perceive to lack through increased consumption. For instance, a socially isolated individual may be more likely to buy a product with anthropomorphic features, while individuals with higher perceived self-threat tend to spend more on products which signal high-status. Due to its increased relevance, it is important to investigate factors which drive compensatory consumption, and derive subsequent implications for marketing practitioners. First, this thesis should provide a comprehensive literature review focusing on antecedents of compensatory consumption behavior. Subsequently, a theoretical model relating underlying drivers of compensatory consumption and behavioral measures shall be designed and experimentally tested. Finally, implications for marketing theory and practice shall be derived.

**Format:** Literature Review, Experiment

**Advisor:** Aleksandar Blečić

**Literature:**


**How the Present Shapes the Past: Exploring the Role of Implicit Theories in Dynamic Customer-Firm Interactions**

For a long time, psychologists have known that people’s memories can be influenced by present knowledge, beliefs, and feelings. One potential consequence of such influence is the “consistency bias”, which entails that people overestimate the consistency between their past and present beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. For instance, people tend to adjust their initial evaluations of political parties or relationship partners to be more congruent with the present. However, there is an important caveat: whether a retrospective bias in evaluations will take the form of consistency seems to depend on individuals’ implicit theories. When people believe that important aspects of the past have changed over time, they tend to overestimate the difference between past and present evaluations.

This thesis aims to explore the relationship between retrospective bias in evaluations and implicit theories in the consumer behavior context. For example, how customers’ evaluations of the present experiences influence their past evaluations, and how are these effects moderated by implicit personal theories? After a literature review, a theoretical model shall be proposed and tested in an experiment. Theoretical and managerial implications shall be derived.

**Format:** Literature Review, Experiment

**Advisor:** Aleksandar Blečić

**Literature:**


Ross, Michael (1989), „Relation of Implicit Theories to the Construction of Personal Histories,“ *Psychological Review*, 96(2), 341-357.
How Customers Remember Their Experiences: Investigating the Conflict Between Experiencing and Remembering

Over the past two decades, researchers have been studying the distinction between “experienced” and “remembered utility” and its implications for decision-making. While experiences are fleeting over time, memories are what we get to keep from them. In addition, the process of remembering experiences does not merely entail passive retrieval of stored information. Rather, remembering seems to be an interactive and reconstructive process. Research in the field of retrospective experience evaluations suggests that memories tend to be biased estimates of actually perceived events. Moreover, memories and “remembered utility” might represent the basis for consumer decision-making. It is therefore necessary to investigate the nature of retrospective evaluations of customer experiences more closely. This thesis aims to address this issue by obtaining insights from consumers, including their recollections and depictions of prior customer experiences. In the first part of the thesis, a thorough literature review on the intersection between retrospective evaluations and customer experiences should be provided. Finally, focus groups with customers should be used to address the main research questions.

Format: Literature Review, Focus Groups

Advisor: Aleksandar Blečić

Literature:


Food Aesthetics, Perceived Healthiness and Overeating Behavior

Food plays a pivotal role in our lives. Organic food and controlled calorie intake are the trend of our time. People try to eat healthier, consume less calories and prefer these calories to come from food that is naturally grown, less processed and without the addition of preservatives. Health professional and responsible marketers focus on reducing overeating and proposing healthier portions. Food packaging and advertising play a key role in people’s healthiness judgements and consumption behavior (portion size, intake, proportion etc.). It is the aim of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature in the field of food aesthetics and food healthiness perception and to identify factors that influence food consumption behaviors. The insights from the literature analysis shall be empirically validated and advanced via a consumer survey before deriving implications for research and practice.

**Type:** Literature review and consumer survey

**Advisor:** Angeliki Kalogeraki

**Literature:**

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## Exploring Potential of Using Phenomenology in Marketing Research

To date, there is much disagreement in academic circles regarding the exact definition of phenomenology. While some see it as a philosophy, there have been several attempts in the last two decades to define and describe phenomenology as a qualitative research method in social sciences. In simple terms, phenomenology is a study of the human experience, as experienced from the first-person point of view. While phenomenology might turn out to be a rich method for investigating consumer experience, research on this topic in marketing remains scarce. The aim of this thesis is two-fold. First, the thesis should try to provide a summary of the phenomenology as a research method, drawing from marketing and other social science research. Second, the thesis should elaborate on the potential of using phenomenology as a qualitative method in marketing and consumer behavior research. Finally, a small-scale consumer research project shall be conducted using phenomenology as a research method.

### Format: Literature Review

### Advisor: Aleksandar Blečić

### Literature:
