

Digital Marketing and Online Communities

Currently available topics for your Master's Thesis

- 1. We Are Joining Online Communities: Motivations and Influences**
 - 2. The Role of Authenticity on Commercial Online Content**
 - 3. Transmission of Social Causes Through Social Media: Information Adoption and Virality**
 - 4. Well-intentioned, But Poorly Received? Customer's Perceptions of Managerial Responses to Online Reviews**
 - 5. Recovering the Unrecoverable? The Product-Service Distinction in the Context of Managerial Responses to Online Reviews**
-

We Are Joining Online Communities: Motivations and Influences

In the era of human centric marketing, customers are strongly integrated into the marketplace through human connectivity. Online communities are playing a pivotal role in our lives and many of us are members of online communities. The members of the communities are exchanging opinions and ideas and offer inspiration to one another about products and services. This master thesis aims to investigate the motivational drivers for using online communities: Is it the information search or the social needs that attract their members? To which extent are the members influenced by others and why? Following a comprehensive literature review, the relationships shall be examined in a consumer survey. Building on the results, theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for marketing theory and practice shall be derived.

Type: Literature review, Survey

Advisor: [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

Literature:

Habibi, Mohammad R., Michel Laroche, and Marie-Odile Richard (2014), "The roles of brand community and community engagement in building brand trust on social media," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, 152–61, DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.016.

Krishen, Anjala S., Orie Berezan, and Carola Raab (2019), "Feelings and functionality in social networking communities: A regulatory focus perspective," *Psychology & Marketing*, 36 (7), 675–86, DOI: 10.1002/mar.21204.

Wu, Jyh-Jeng, Ying-Hueih Chen, and Yu-Shuo Chung (2010), "Trust factors influencing virtual community members: A study of transaction communities," *Journal of Business Research*, 63 (9-10), 1025–32, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.03.022.

The Role of Authenticity on Commercial Online Content

Millions of pieces of online content are generated each day. With the mass production of online content and its widespread use by companies, internet users have started becoming suspicious about the authenticity of the generated content, especially when it involves product placement. Some of the commercial posts become successful and turn viral while others receive criticism and negative word-of-mouth. Studies indicate that higher perceived authenticity yields positive outcomes, but it remains unclear how a brand can generate authentic online content? Do the outlet, the post creator, or type of content play a role? What are potential brand benefits? It is the aim of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature in the field of commercial online content authenticity and to identify potential factors that influence authenticity. The insights from the literature analysis shall be empirically validated and advanced via consumer experiments before deriving implications for research and practice.

Type: Literature review, Experiment

Advisor: [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

Literature:

Zhang, Zhe and Vanessa M. Patrick (2021), "Mickey D's Has More Street Cred Than McDonald's: Consumer Brand Nickname Use Signals Information Authenticity," *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (5), 58–73.

Audrezet, Alice, Gwarlann de Kerviler, and Julie Guidry Moulard (2020), "Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation," *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–69.

Nunes, Joseph C., Andrea Ordanini, and Gaia Giambastiani (2021), "The Concept of Authenticity: What It Means to Consumers," *Journal of Marketing*, 85 (4), 1–20.

Transmission of Social Causes Through Social Media: Information Adoption and Virality

More and more brands are engaging in social cause related activities and market their activities through social media. These activities often produce benefits for both the society and the brand. Experts argue that social marketing, if authentic, can positively influence brand attitude and brand trust, two key aspects benefitting the brand image. Social marketing also offers the possibility to the brand to differentiate itself from competitors, motivating brands to engage in activism. Social media enhance the information flow between recipients and exposure to social causes and therefore, it is often the preferred medium to promote the social activities of the brand. Drawing from literature on social marketing and digital marketing, the thesis should provide a comprehensive overview of the literature about corporate social marketing on social media and to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of these campaigns on social media. The insights from the literature analysis shall be empirically validated before deriving implications for research and practice.

Type: Literature review, Survey or Experiment

Advisor: [Angeliki Kalogeraki](#)

Literature:

Inoue, Y., & Kent, A. (2014), "A conceptual framework for understanding the effects of corporate social marketing on consumer behavior," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 121(4), 621-633.

Mano, R. S. (2014), "Social media, social causes, giving behavior and money contributions," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 287-293.

Robinson, S. R., Irmak, C., & Jayachandran, S. (2012), "Choice of Cause in Cause-Related Marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, 76(4), 126-139.

Well-intentioned, But Poorly Received? Customer's Perceptions of Managerial Responses to Online Reviews

Companies frequently ask their customers to review their products and services online, for example, on online review platforms or on companies' homepages. Positive reviews improve average ratings (e.g., Google or booking.com ratings) and reflect positively on the image of brands and companies, with negative reviews having the opposite effect. In the past decade, companies have realized the impact of online reviews on the choice of other consumers and therefore considered responding to them. Such a response is defined as "the act of managers publicly replying to online reviews" (Wang and Chaudry 2018 p. 163), which in turn induces effects on the reviewer and other readers. Previous research has investigated the impact of different types of online reviews (e.g., positive/negative reviews) and different types of responses (e.g., standardized/customized responses), but to date, there remain still some gaps in gaining a deeper understanding of the response mechanisms and the impact of companies' responses to reviews on other customers reading these responses. Thus, this thesis aims to (1) provide a comprehensive literature review on managerial responses to online reviews and potential factors that might influence this relationship, (2) design and experimentally test a conceptual model relating to underlying influencing factors that might affect the perception of the response, and (3) derive implications for research, managers dealing with online reviews, and future research.

Format: Literature Review, Experiment

Advisor: [Alexander Rupertus](#)

Literature:

Chen, W., Gu, B., Ye, Q., & Zhu, K. X. (2019). Measuring and managing the externality of managerial responses to online customer reviews. *Information Systems Research*, 30(1), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2018.0781>

Huang, Y., Jin, Y., & Huang, J. (2021). Impact of managerial responses on product sales: Examining the moderating role of competitive intensity and market position. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 22(2), 544–570. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00671>

Le, L. H., & Ha, Q. A. (2021). Effects of negative reviews and managerial responses on consumer attitude and subsequent purchase behavior: An experimental design. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 124(May), 106912. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106912>

Wang, Y., & Chaudhry, A. (2018). When and how managers' responses to online reviews affect subsequent reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 55(2), 163–177. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.15.0511>

Recovering the Unrecoverable? The Product-Service Distinction in the Context of Managerial Responses to Online Reviews

Companies frequently ask their customers to review their products and services online, especially on online review platforms and their own homepages. Positive reviews improve average ratings (e.g., Google or booking.com ratings) and reflect positively on the image of brands and companies, with negative reviews having the opposite effect. In the past decade, companies have realized the impact of online reviews on the choice of other consumers and therefore considered responding to them. Such a response is defined as “the act of managers publicly replying to online reviews” (Wang and Chaudry 2018 p. 163), which in turn induces effects on the reviewer and other readers. Most of the research conducted in this field has investigated the effect of managerial responses to online reviews in a service context (e.g., hotel or restaurant visits), but not in a product context. Thus, this gap shall be addressed to shed light on potential behavioral differences between products and services when managers respond to online reviews. Therefore, this thesis aims to (1) provide a comprehensive literature review on managerial responses to online reviews and differences between products and services, (2) design and experimentally test a conceptual model relating to the product-service distinction within the online review-managerial response mechanism, and (3) derive implications for research, managers dealing with online reviews, and future research.

Format: Literature Review, Experiment

Advisor: [Alexander Rupertus](#)

Literature:

Chen, W., Gu, B., Ye, Q., & Zhu, K. X. (2019). Measuring and managing the externality of managerial responses to online customer reviews. *Information Systems Research*, 30(1), 81–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2018.0781>

Le, L. H., & Ha, Q. A. (2021). Effects of negative reviews and managerial responses on consumer attitude and subsequent purchase behavior: An experimental design. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 124(May), 106912. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106912>

Surachartkumtonkun, J. (Nui), Grace, D., & Ross, M. (2021). Unfair customer reviews: Third-party perceptions and managerial responses. *Journal of Business Research*, 132(April 2019), 631–640.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.09.071>

Wang, Y., & Chaudhry, A. (2018). When and how managers’ responses to online reviews affect subsequent reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 55(2), 163–177.
<https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.15.0511>

