

Bachelorseminar Marketing & Vertrieb

Themen und Auswahlprozess

Institut für Wirtschaftsinformatik und Marketing (IISM)
Forschungsgruppe Marketing & Vertrieb



Zielgruppe und Bewerbungsprozess

- Zielgruppe:
 - Interessenten an einer Bachelorarbeit im Marketing
 - Die Teilnahme vor dem Schreiben der Bachelorarbeit wird dringend empfohlen

- Anzahl Plätze:
 - Es stehen 12 Seminarplätze zur Verfügung
 - Platzbeschränkung macht Bewerbungsprozess nötig

- Die Bewerbung für das Seminar erfolgt über die Plattform <https://portal.wiwi.kit.edu>

- Auswahlmechanismus:
 - Modifiziertes Bestenprinzip, d.h. die leistungsstärksten Bewerber werden – unter Berücksichtigung von Studienplanung u. Schwerpunktsetzung – zuerst berücksichtigt.

- Fragen zum Bewerbungsprozess bitte an saskia.jacob@kit.edu

Termine

- Themen online: ab 21. Juni 2021
- Bewerbungsfrist: bis zum 4. Juli 2021, 23:59 Uhr
- Bekanntgabe der ersten Zusagen: 5. Juli 2021
- Frist zur Annahme zugesagter Plätze: bis zum 9. Juli 2021, 23:59 Uhr
- Vorbesprechung (Anwesenheitspflicht!): 28. Juli 2021, 16:00 – 17:30 Uhr, vor Ort
- Bearbeitungsstart: 28. Juli 2021
- Abgabe der Seminararbeit: 25. November 2021, 12:00 Uhr
- Präsentation (Anwesenheitspflicht!): 16. und 17. Dezember 2021, vor Ort, vorauss. 10:00-16:00 Uhr

(Grobe) Form der Seminararbeit (1/2)

■ Zielsetzung:

Im Rahmen des Seminars sollen die Teilnehmer lernen, mit wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten im Marketing umzugehen. Konkret besteht ihre Aufgabe darin, sich mit einer aktuellen Forschungsarbeit intensiv vertraut zu machen und die zitierte Literatur zu beschaffen und zu lesen. Zudem sollen sie die empirischen und statistischen Verfahren nachvollziehen und die Ergebnisse sicher interpretieren. Abschließend sollen die Teilnehmer die betrachtete Studie in Beziehung setzen zu aus dem Studium bekannten Inhalten und den Beitrag der analysierten Studie kritisch würdigen.

■ Umfang:

Schriftliche Arbeit: nicht mehr als 15 Seiten

Präsentation im Seminar: 15 Minuten + 10 Minuten Diskussion

(Grobe) Form der Seminararbeit (2/2)

■ **Bewertung der Leistung:**

60% Seminararbeit

30% Präsentation

10% Beteiligung am Seminar

■ **Konkretisierung:**

Genauere Hinweise zur konkreten Ausgestaltung werden in der Vorbesprechung am 28. Juli 2021 gegeben

Zu den Themen

- Gemäß der vorgestellten Zielsetzung (Folie 4), beziehen sich die einzelnen Themen des Seminars auf aktuelle Forschungsarbeiten im Marketing
- Eine Liste der aktuellen Themen finden Sie auf den Folien 7 bis 12.
- Die Präferenzen können im Seminarmodul angegeben werden. Die Zuteilung der Themen erfolgt nach einem modifizierten Bestenprinzip, d.h. der beste Bewerber bekommt zuerst seinen Erstwunsch erfüllt, dann der zweitbeste Bewerber usw.
- Themen werden nicht doppelt vergeben, d.h. es kann einem Teilnehmer auch ein Thema zugeteilt werden, das er oder sie nicht explizit als Themenwunsch genannt hat
- Eigene Themenvorschläge durch Studierende sind nicht möglich

Themenliste (1/6)

1. Hagen, Linda (2021), Pretty healthy food: How and when aesthetics enhance perceived healthiness, *Journal of Marketing*, 85, 2, 129145.



Marketers frequently style food to look pretty (e.g., in advertising). This article investigates how pretty aesthetics (defined by classical aesthetic principles, such as order, symmetry, and balance) influence healthiness judgments. The author proposes that prettier food is perceived as healthier, specifically because classical aesthetic features make it appear more natural. In a pilot, six main studies and four supplemental studies (total N = 4,301) across unhealthy and healthy, processed and unprocessed, and photographed and real foods alike, people judged prettier versions of the same food as healthier (e.g., more nutrients, less fat), despite equal perceived price. Even given financial stakes, people were misled by prettiness. In line with the proposed naturalness process, perceived naturalness mediated the effect; belief in a "natural = healthy" connection moderated it; expressive aesthetics, which do not evoke naturalness, did not produce the effect (despite being pretty); and reminders of artificial modification, which suppress perceived naturalness, mitigated it. Given that pretty food styling can harm consumers by misleading healthiness judgments for unhealthy foods, managers and policy makers should consider modification disclaimers as a tool to mitigate the "pretty = healthy" bias.

2. Luo, Xueming, Qin, Marco Shaojun, Fang, Zheng, Qu, Zhe (2021), Artificial Intelligence Coaches for Sales Agents: Caveats and Solutions, *Journal of Marketing*, 85, 2, 1432.



Firms are exploiting artificial intelligence (AI) coaches to provide training to sales agents and improve their job skills. The authors present several caveats associated with such practices based on a series of randomized field experiments. Experiment 1 shows that the incremental benefit of the AI coach over human managers is heterogeneous across agents in an inverted-U shape: whereas middle-ranked agents improve their performance by the largest amount, both bottom- and top-ranked agents show limited incremental gains. This pattern is driven by a learning-based mechanism in which bottom-ranked agents encounter the most severe information overload problem with the AI versus human coach, while top-ranked agents hold the strongest aversion to the AI relative to a human coach. To alleviate the challenge faced by bottom-ranked agents, Experiment 2 redesigns the AI coach by restricting the training feedback level and shows a significant improvement in agent performance. Experiment 3 reveals that the AI-human coach assemblage outperforms either the AI or human coach alone. This assemblage can harness the hard data skills of the AI coach and soft interpersonal skills of human managers, solving both problems faced by bottom- and top-ranked agents. These findings offer novel insights into AI coaches for researchers and managers alike.

Themenliste (2/6)

3. Schmitz, Christian, Friess, Maximilian, Alavi, Sascha, Habel, Johannes (2020), Understanding the impact of relationship disruptions, *Journal of Marketing*, 84, 1, 6687.



Personal relationships between salespeople and customers are essential for the success of business-to-business relationships, and research has shown that a change of the salesperson can severely harm financial performance. However, such interpersonal relationship disruptions may also have positive effects by encouraging vitalizing reexplorations of the relationship. Using multilevel loyalty theory and relationship life cycle theory, the authors offer a comprehensive conceptualization of potentially countervailing consequences of relationship disruptions. In particular, disruptions may have different effects on resale revenue (from previously sold products) versus new sale revenue (from newly sold products), contingent on both the history and expected future development of the relationship. Therefore, this study examines moderators on the firm-level relationship prior to disruption and salesperson relationship management afterward. Longitudinal data from 2,040 customers of an international business-to-business firm reveal that a disruption can increase overall performance by more than 29%, depending on the firm-level relationship before disruption and the new salesperson's relationship management. Managers can use these findings proactively to evaluate and manage the risks and opportunities involved in relationship disruptions.

4. Howell, John R., Ebbes, Peter, Liechty, John C. (2021), Gremlins in the Data: Identifying the Information Content of Research Subjects, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58, 1, 7494.



Empirical demand functions, such as those from choice-based conjoint analyses, are critical to many aspects of marketing. Approaches have been developed to ensure that research subjects provide honest and thoughtful responses. However, to reduce costs, researchers increasingly collect data online, under conditions that compromise the value of the information provided. Objective measures related to how the study is completed, such as latency (how quickly answers are given), can only be tied to other objective measures (such as the consistency of the answers), but ultimately their relationship to the subject's utility function is questionable. To address this problem, the authors introduce a mixture modeling framework that clusters subjects based on variances. The proposed model naturally groups subjects based on their internal consistency. The authors argue that a higher level of internal consistency (i.e., lower variance) reflects more engaged consumers who have sufficient experience with the product category and choice task. "Gremlins," in contrast, behave such that the noise in their responses overwhelms any signal, leading to a lack of predictive power. This approach provides an automated way to determine which respondents are relevant. The authors discuss the conceptual and modeling framework and illustrate the method using both simulated and commercial data.

Themenliste (3/6)

5. Kupor, Daniella, Laurin, Kristin (2020), Probable cause: The influence of prior probabilities on forecasts and perceptions of magnitude, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 46, 5, 833852.



Consumers' judgments of the magnitude of benefit that a product provides increase their likelihood of purchasing it, and their judgments of the magnitude of harm that accrues from purchasing a product decrease their likelihood of purchasing it. When assessing the magnitude of a product's potential outcome, consumers often encounter information about its probability of occurring. Ten studies demonstrate that this information biases consumers' product decisions. Consumers both expect and perceive larger-probability outcomes to be larger in magnitude—even when they receive identical and objective information about the outcome's actual magnitude. This bias emerges because people believe that larger probabilities emanate from more powerful causal antecedents, and in turn expect more powerful antecedents to produce larger outcomes. Moreover, this bias shapes consumers' product decisions. Of course, it is rational for people to prefer products that promise high-probability benefits and to avoid products that produce high-probability harms. But consumers irrationally overweight this probability information because it distorts their judgments of the magnitude of products' benefits and harms, and this distortion biases their purchase decisions.

6. Li, Hongshuang, Ma, Liye (2020), Charting the Path to Purchase Using Topic Models, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 57, 6, 10191036.



In gathering information for an intended purchase decision, consumers submit search phrases to online search engines. These search phrases directly express the consumers' needs in their own words and thus provide valuable information to marketing managers. Interpreting consumers' search phrases renders a better understanding of their purchase intentions, which is critical for marketing success. In this article, the authors develop an integrated model to connect the latent topics embedded in consumers' search phrases to their website visits and purchase decisions. Using a unique data set containing more than 8,000 search phrases submitted by consumers, the model identifies latent topics underlying the searches that led consumers to the firm's website. Compared with a model lacking any textual information from consumers' search phrases, a model using textual data in a heuristic approach, and a model based on the latent Dirichlet allocation, the proposed model provides a better evaluation of a consumer's position on the path to purchase and achieves much better predictive accuracy, which could in turn substantially increase the firm's revenue. The authors also extend the discussion to aggregators, affiliated websites, and segments of consumers who are exposed to the firm's outbound ads. Marketing managers can use this method to extract structured information from consumers' search phrases to facilitate their inference of consumers' latent purchase states and thereby improve marketing efficiency.

Themenliste (4/6)

7. **Grewal, Dhruv, Noble, Stephanie M., Ahlbom, Carl-Philip, Nordfält, Jens (2020), The Sales Impact of Using Handheld Scanners: Evidence from the Field, Journal of Marketing Research, 57, 3, 527547.**



Anecdotal evidence is mixed regarding whether handheld scanners used in stores increase or decrease consumer sales. This article reports on three field studies, supported by eye-tracking technology and matched sales receipts, as well as two laboratory studies that show that handheld scanner use increases sales, notably through unplanned, healthier, and impulsive purchases. The findings highlight that these effects may be limited by factors such as not having a budget; for those without a budget, use of scanners can decrease sales. Building on embodied cognition and cognitive appraisal theories, the authors predict that scanners, as a bodily extension, influence sales through both cognitive (shelf attention, perceived control) and affective (number of products touched, shopping experience) mechanisms. The results offer implications for retailers considering whether to integrate scanners into their store environments.

8. **Sharif, Marissa A., Woolley, Kaitlin (2020), The Effect of Categorization on Goal Progress Perceptions and Motivation, Journal of Consumer Research, 47, 4, 608630.**



Consumers monitor their goal progress to know how much effort they need to invest to achieve their goals. However, the factors influencing consumers' goal progress monitoring are largely unexamined. Seven studies (N= 8,409) identified categorization as a novel factor that influences goal progress perceptions, with consequences for motivation. When pursuing a goal, categorization cues lead consumers to perceive that their goal-relevant actions are in separate categories; as a result, consumers anchor their estimates of goal progress on the proportion of categories completed and are less affected by the absolute amount of progress made than when categorization cues are not present. As a result, depending on the proportion of categories completed, categorization can lead consumers to infer greater progress when they are actually farther from their goal, and to infer less progress when they are closer to their goal. We demonstrate consequences of this effect for consumers' motivation and goal attainment in incentive compatible contexts.

Themenliste (5/6)

9. Tuk, Mirjam A., Prokopec, Sonja, van den Bergh, Bram (2021), Do versus Don't: The Impact of Framing on Goal-Level Setting, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47, 6, 1003 1024.



The consumer behavior literature extensively studied the impact of goal setting on behavior and performance. However, much less is known about the antecedents of goal-level setting—consumers' decision of whether to work out twice or three times per week. Consumers can decide how many goal-consistent activities to undertake ("goal-consistent decision frame"; such as exercising two days per week) or to forego ("goal-inconsistent decision frame"; such as not exercising five days per week). While objectively the same decision, we argue that these different frames impact consumers' ambition. Making a decision to forego goal-consistent activities triggers negative, self-evaluative emotions and to compensate for these unfavorable self-evaluations, consumers set more ambitious goal levels. Across a variety of contexts, consumers are more ambitious when their focal decision is inconsistent with goal achievement. For instance, they decide to work out more often when they decide how many work-out sessions they would skip (vs. attend). The impact of goal-inconsistent decision framing is mitigated when the activity is less instrumental toward goal achievement, and when negative self-evaluative emotions are alleviated through self-affirmation.

10. Woolley, Kaitlin, Sharif, Marissa A. (2021), Incentives Increase Relative Positivity of Review Content and Enjoyment of Review Writing, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58, 3, 539-558.



A series of controlled experiments examine how the strategy of incentivizing reviews influences consumers' expressions of positivity. Incentivized (vs. unincentivized) reviews contained a greater proportion of positive relative to negative emotion across a variety of product and service experiences (e.g., videos, service providers, consumer packaged goods companies). This effect occurred for both financial and nonfinancial incentives and when assessing review content across multiple natural language processing tools and human judgments. Incentives influence review content by modifying the experience of writing reviews. That is, when incentives are associated with review writing, they cause the positive affect that results from receiving an incentive to transfer to the review-writing experience, making review writing more enjoyable. In line with this process, the effect of an incentive on review positivity attenuates when incentives are weakly (vs. strongly) associated with review writing (i.e., incentive for "participating in an experiment" vs. "writing a review") and when the incentive does not transfer positive affect (i.e., when an incentive is provided by a disliked company). By examining when incentives do (vs. do not) adjust the relative positivity of written reviews, this research offers theoretical insight into the literature on incentives, motivation, and word of mouth, with practical implications for managers.

Themenliste (6/6)

11. Mookerjee, Siddhanth Sid, Cornil, Yann, Hoegg, JoAndrea (2021), From Waste to Taste: How "Ugly" Labels Can Increase Purchase of Unattractive Produce, *Journal of Marketing*, 85, 3.



Food producers and retailers throw away large amounts of perfectly edible produce that fails to meet appearance standards, contributing to the environmental issue of food waste. The authors examine why consumers discard aesthetically unattractive produce, and they test a low-cost, easy-to-implement solution: emphasizing the produce's aesthetic flaw through "ugly" labeling (e.g., labeling cucumbers with cosmetic defects "Ugly Cucumbers" on store displays or advertising). Seven experiments, including two conducted in the field, demonstrate that "ugly" labeling corrects for consumers' biased expectations regarding key attributes of unattractive produce—particularly tastiness—and thus increases purchase likelihood. "Ugly" labeling is most effective when associated with moderate (rather than steep) price discounts. Against managers' intuition, it is also more effective than alternative labeling that does not exclusively point out the aesthetic flaw, such as "imperfect" labeling. This research provides clear managerial recommendations on the labeling and the pricing of unattractive produce while addressing the issue of food waste.

12. Mrkva, Kellen, Posner, Nathaniel A., Reeck, Crystal, Johnson, Eric J. (2021), Do Nudges Reduce Disparities? Choice Architecture Compensates for Low Consumer Knowledge, *Journal of Marketing*, 0022242921993186.



Choice architecture tools, commonly known as nudges, powerfully impact decisions and can improve welfare. Yet it is unclear who is most impacted by nudges. If nudge effects are moderated by socioeconomic status (SES), these differential effects could increase or decrease disparities across consumers. Using field data and several preregistered studies, the authors demonstrate that consumers with lower SES, domain knowledge, and numerical ability are impacted more by a wide variety of nudges. As a result, "good nudges" designed to increase selection of superior options reduced choice disparities, improving choices more among consumers with lower SES, lower financial literacy, and lower numeracy than among those with higher levels of these variables. Compared with "good nudges," "bad nudges" designed to facilitate selection of inferior options exacerbated choice disparities. These results generalized across real retirement decisions, different nudges, and different decision domains. Across studies, the authors tested different explanations of why SES, domain knowledge, and numeracy moderate nudges. The results suggest that nudges are a useful tool for those who wish to reduce disparities. The research concludes with a discussion of implications for marketing firms and segmentation.