

Bachelorseminar Marketing & Vertrieb

Themen und Auswahlprozess



Zielgruppe und Bewerbungsprozess

- Zielgruppe:
 - Interessenten an einer Bachelorarbeit im Marketing
 - Die Teilnahme vor dem Verfassen 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 beatrice.weber@kit.edu

Termine

- Themen online: ab 03. Juli 2023
- Bewerbungsfrist: bis zum 16. Juli 2023, 23:59 Uhr
- Bekanntgabe der ersten Zusagen: 17. Juli 2023
- Frist zur Annahme zugesagter Plätze: bis zum 21. Juli 2023, 23:59 Uhr
- Kickoff (Anwesenheitspflicht!)
& Bearbeitungsstart: 26. Juli 2023, 09:45 – 11:15 Uhr, vor Ort
- Abgabe der Seminararbeit: 29. November 2023, 12:00 Uhr
- Präsentationstraining zwischen Abgabe und Präsentation
- Präsentation (Anwesenheitspflicht!): 14. und 15. Dezember 2023, vor Ort, vorauss. 09:30-16:00 Uhr

Gebäude 20.21,
Seminarraum 115

(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 Punkte Seminararbeit

30 Punkte Präsentation

10 Punkte Beteiligung am Seminar

■ **Konkretisierung**

Genauere Hinweise zur konkreten Ausgestaltung werden in der Vorbesprechung (Kickoff) am 26. Juli 2023 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 (siehe Folie 2)
- 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. Strulov-Shalin, Avner (2023), More Than a Penny's Worth: Left-Digit Bias and Firm Pricing, *The Review of Economic Studies*, 00, 1-34.



Firms arguably price at ninety-nine-ending prices because of left-digit bias—the tendency of consumers to perceive a \$4.99 as much lower than a \$5.00. Analysis of retail scanner data on 3500 products sold by twenty-five U.S. chains provides robust support for this explanation. I structurally estimate the magnitude of left-digit bias and find that consumers respond to a one-cent increase from a ninety-nine-ending price as if it were more than a twenty-cent increase. Next, I solve a portable model of optimal pricing given left-digit biased demand. I use this model and other pricing procedures to estimate the level of left-digit bias retailers perceive when making their pricing decisions. While all retailers respond to left-digit bias by using ninety-nine-ending prices, their behaviour is consistently at odds with the demand they face. Firms price as if the bias were much smaller than it is, and their pricing is more consistent with heuristics and rule-of-thumb than with optimization given the structure of demand. I calculate that retailers forgo 1–4% of potential gross profits due to this coarse response to left-digit bias.

2. Geyskens, Inge, Deleersnyder, Barbara, Dekimpe, Marnik, Lin, Didi (2023), Do consumers benefit from national-brand listings by hard discounters, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*.



Hard discounters are moving away from an almost exclusive private-label (PL) focus by adding a select set of big-name brands to their otherwise scanty assortments. However, to what extent consumers benefit from this strategy remains unclear. This study quantifies the consumer-welfare impact of adding a select set of leading national brands to hard discounter Lidl's assortment in the German market. We rely on the economic concept of compensating variation, which reflects the consumer-welfare effect in monetary terms and captures the impact on consumer prices while accounting for consumers' possible appreciation of more convenient access to big-name brands. Although hard discounters argue that adding big-name brands to their assortment benefits consumers, our results reveal unfavorable price developments, not just at the hard discounter but in the entire market. Importantly, impoverished consumers are hurt more severely, with a monetary loss due to the price increase across the 18 categories in our sample that is about five times larger than for the more affluent.

Themenliste (2/6)

3. **Sokolova, Tatiana, Krishna, Aradhna, Döring, Tim (2023), Paper Meets Plastic: The Perceived Environmental Friendliness of Product Packaging, Journal of Consumer Research, 00.**



Packaging waste makes up more than 10% of the landfilled waste in the United States. While consumers often want to make environmentally friendly product choices, we find that their perceptions of the environmental friendliness of product packaging may systematically deviate from its objective environmental friendliness. Eight studies (N=4,103) document the perceived environmental friendliness (PEF) bias whereby consumers judge plastic packaging with additional paper to be more environmentally friendly than identical plastic packaging without the paper. The PEF

bias is driven by consumers' "paper = good, plastic = bad" beliefs and by proportional reasoning, wherein packaging with a greater paper-to-plastic proportion is judged as more environmentally friendly. We further show that the PEF bias impacts consumers' willingness to pay and product choice. Importantly, this bias can be mitigated by a "minimal packaging sticker" intervention, which increases the environmental friendliness perceptions of plastic-only packaging, rendering plastic-packaged products to be preferable to their plastic-plus-paper-packaged counterparts. This research contributes to the packaging literature in marketing and to research on sustainability while offering practical implications for managers and public policy officials.

4. **Bergner, Anouk S., Christian Hildebrand, and Gerald Häubl (2023), Machine Talk: How Verbal Embodiment in Conversational AI Shapes Consumer–Brand Relationships, Journal of Consumer Research.**



This research shows that AI-based conversational interfaces can have a profound impact on consumer–brand relationships. We develop a conceptual model of verbal embodiment in technology-mediated communication that integrates three key properties of human-to-human dialogue—(1) turn-taking (i.e., alternating contributions by the two parties), (2) turn initiation (i.e., the act of initiating the next turn in a sequence), and (3) grounding between turns (i.e., acknowledging the other party's contribution by restating or rephrasing it). These fundamental conversational properties systematically shape consumers' perception of an AI-based conversational interface, their perception of the brand that the interface represents, and their behavior in connection with that brand. Converging evidence from four studies shows that these dialogue properties enhance the perceived humanness of the interface, which in turn promotes more intimate consumer–brand relationships and more favorable behavioral brand outcomes (greater recommendation acceptance, willingness to pay a price premium, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty). Moreover, we show that these effects are reduced in contexts requiring less mutual understanding between the consumer and the brand. This research highlights how fundamental principles of human-to-human communication can be harnessed to design more intimate consumer–brand interactions in an increasingly AI-driven marketplace.

Themenliste (3/6)

5. **Han, Elizabeth, Dezhi Yin, and Han Zhang (2022), Bots with Feelings: Should AI Agents Express Positive Emotion in Customer Service?, Information Systems Research.**



Customer service employees are generally advised to express positive emotion during their interactions with customers. The rise and maturity of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered conversational agents, also known as chatbots, beg the question: should AI agents be equipped with the ability to express positive emotion during customer service interactions? This research explores how, when, and why an AI agent's expression of positive emotion affects customers' service evaluations. We argue that AI-expressed positive emotion can influence customers via dual pathways: an affective pathway of emotional contagion and a cognitive pathway of expectation-disconfirmation. We propose that positive emotion expressed by an AI agent (versus a human employee) is less effective in facilitating service evaluations because of a heightened level of expectation-disconfirmation. We further introduce a novel individual difference variable, customers' relationship norm orientation, which affects their expectations toward the AI agent and moderates the cognitive pathway. Results from three laboratory experiments substantiate our claims. By revealing a distinctive impact of positive emotion expressed by an AI agent compared with a human employee, these findings deepen our understanding of customers' reactions to emotional AIs, and they offer valuable insights for the deployment of AIs in customer service.

6. **Chen, Gang, et al. (2023), A Theory-Driven Deep Learning Method for Voice Chat-Based Customer Response Prediction, Information Systems Research.**



As artificial intelligence and digitalization technologies are flourishing real-time, online interaction-based commercial modes, exploiting customers' purchase intention implied in online interaction processes may foster huge business opportunities. In this study, we target the task of voice chat-based customer response prediction in an emerging online interaction-based commercial mode, the invite-online-and-experience-in-store mode. Prior research shows that satisfaction, which can be revealed by the discrepancy between prior expectation and actual experience, is a key factor to disentangle customers' purchase intention, whereas black-box deep learning methods empirically promise us advantageous capabilities in dealing with complex voice data, for example, text and audio information incorporated in voice chat. To this end, we propose a theory-driven deep learning method that enables us to (1) learn customers' personalized product preferences and dynamic satisfaction in the absence of their profile information, (2) model customers' actual experiences based on multiview voice chat information in an interlaced way, and (3) enhance the customer response prediction performance of a black-box deep learning model with theory-driven dynamic satisfaction. Empirical evaluation results demonstrate the advantageous prediction performance of our proposed method over state-of-the-art deep learning alternatives. Investigation of cumulative satisfaction reveals the collaborative predictive roles of theory-driven dynamic satisfaction and deep representation features for customer response prediction. Explanatory analysis further renders insights into customers' personalized preferences and dynamic satisfaction for key product attributes.

Themenliste (4/6)

7. **De Bellis, Emanuel, Johar, Gita Venkataramani, Poletti, Nicola (2023), Meaning of Manual Labor Impedes Consumer Adoption of Autonomous Products, Journal of Marketing, 0, 0.**



Technologies are becoming increasingly autonomous, able to complete tasks on behalf of consumers without human intervention. For example, robot vacuums clean the floor while cooking machines implement recipes on their own. These autonomous products free consumers from daily chores that they used to perform manually. The current research suggests that some consumers derive meaning from completing such manual tasks, and that this meaning of manual labor acts as a barrier to the adoption of autonomous products. A series of field and experimental studies shows that consumers who score high (vs. low) on the meaning of manual labor construct tend to evaluate autonomous products less favorably and adopt them less frequently. However, making alternative sources of meaning in life salient can serve as a remedy to increase autonomous product adoption among these consumers. One such strategy is to emphasize that the time gained through the use of autonomous products can be spent on meaningful activities, thus offsetting the detrimental effects of meaning of manual labor on autonomous product adoption. The findings suggest effective interventions for firms that offer autonomous products while stressing the need to provide meaningful experiences to consumers.

8. **Karlinsky-Shichor, Yael, Netzer, Oded (2023), Automating the B2B Salesperson Pricing Decisions: A Human-Machine Hybrid Approach, Marketing Science, 0, 0.**



We propose a human-machine hybrid approach to automating decision making in high human-interaction environments and apply it in the business-to-business (B2B) retail context. Using sales transactions data from a B2B aluminum retailer, we create an automated version of each salesperson, which learns and automatically reapplies the salesperson's pricing policy. In a field experiment with the B2B retailer, we provide salespeople with their own model's price recommendations in real time. We find that, despite the loss of private salesperson information, reducing intertemporal behavioral biases by providing the model's price to the salesperson increases profits for treated quotes by 11% relative to a control condition. Using counterfactual analyses, we show that although the model's pricing leads to higher profitability in most cases, salespeople generate higher profits when pricing out-of-the-ordinary or complex quotes. Accordingly, we propose a machine learning hybrid pricing strategy with two levels of automation. First, a random forest model automatically allocates quotes to either the model or the salesperson based on its prediction of whose pricing would generate higher profits. Then, if the quote is allocated to the model, the model determines the price. The hybrid strategy generates profits significantly higher than either the model or the salespeople.

Themenliste (5/6)

9. **Siy, John Oliver, Germano, Adriana L., Vianna, Laura, Azpeitia, Jovani, Yan, Shaoxiong, Montoya, Amanda K., & Cheryan, Sapna (2023), Does the follow-your-passions ideology cause greater academic and occupational gender disparities than other cultural ideologies? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 0, 0 (Advance online publication).**



Five preregistered studies (N = 1934) demonstrate that the prevalent U.S. ideology to “follow your passions” perpetuates academic and occupational gender disparities compared to some other cultural ideologies. Study 1 shows that the follow-your-passions ideology is commonly used by U.S. students in making academic choices. Studies 2–5 find that making the follow-your-passions ideology salient causes greater academic and occupational gender disparities compared to the resources ideology (i.e., the idea that one should pursue a field that leads to high income and job security). In Study 4, the follow-your-passions ideology causes greater gender disparities even when compared to a cultural ideology that aligns more with the female gender role (i.e., communal ideology). In Study 5, a moderated mediation analysis supports the hypothesis that gender disparities are explained by women’s versus men’s greater tendency to draw upon female role-congruent selves when the follow-your-passions ideology is salient compared to when the resources ideology is salient. Drawing upon female role-congruent selves remains a significant mediator even when accounting for alternative mediators (e.g., appropriateness of ideology for one’s gender). The follow-your-passions ideology may not seem explicitly gendered, but it causes greater academic and occupational gender disparities compared to some other cultural ideologies.

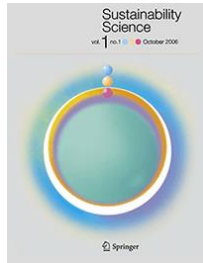
10. **Aaron M. Garvey, TaeWoo Kim, Adam Duhachek (2022), Bad News? Send an AI. Good News? Send a Human, Journal of Marketing, 87, 1.**



The present research demonstrates how consumer responses to negative and positive offers are influenced by whether the administering marketing agent is an artificial intelligence (AI) or a human. In the case of a product or service offer that is worse than expected, consumers respond better when dealing with an AI agent in the form of increased purchase likelihood and satisfaction. In contrast, for an offer that is better than expected, consumers respond more positively to a human agent. The authors demonstrate that AI agents, compared with human agents, are perceived to have weaker intentions when administering offers, which accounts for this effect. That is, consumers infer that AI agents lack selfish intentions in the case of an offer that favors the agent and lack benevolent intentions in the case of an offer that favors the customer, thereby dampening the extremity of consumer responses. Moreover, the authors demonstrate a moderating effect, such that marketers may anthropomorphize AI agents to strengthen perceived intentions, providing an avenue to receive due credit from consumers when the agent provides a better offer and mitigate blame when it provides a worse offer. Potential ethical concerns with the use of AI to bypass consumer resistance to negative offers are discussed.

Themenliste (6/6)

11. Connor R. Forsythe, Kenneth T. Gillingham, Jeremy J. Michalek, Kate S. Whitefoot (2023), Technology advancement is driving electric vehicle adoption, *Sustainability Science*, 120, 23.



Electric vehicle sales have been growing rapidly in the United States and around the world. This study explores the drivers of demand for electric vehicles, examining whether this trend is primarily a result of technology improvements or changes in consumer preferences for the technology over time. We conduct a discrete choice experiment of new vehicle consumers in the United States, weighted to be representative of the population. Results suggest that improved technology has been the stronger force. Estimates of consumer willingness to pay for vehicle attributes show that when consumers compare a gasoline vehicle to its battery electric vehicle (BEV) counterpart, the improved operating cost, acceleration, and fast-charging capabilities of today's BEVs mostly or entirely compensate for their perceived disadvantages, particularly for longer-range BEVs. Moreover, forecasted improvements of BEV range and price suggest that consumer valuation of many BEVs is expected to equal or exceed their gasoline counterparts by 2030. A suggestive market-wide simulation extrapolation indicates that if every gasoline vehicle had a BEV option in 2030, the majority of new car and near-majority of new sport-utility vehicle choice shares could be electric in that year due to projected technology improvements alone.

12. Lane Peterson Fronczek, Martin Mende, Maura L. Scott, Gergana Y. Nenkov, Anders Gustafsson (2022), Friend or foe? Can anthropomorphizing self-tracking devices backfire on marketers and consumers?, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, in press.



Self-quantification, with the promise of motivating consumers to engage in health behaviors through measuring their performance, is a popular trend amongst consumers. Despite the economic impact of self-tracking technologies, consumers' experiences with self-tracking devices and corresponding consequences for firms remain understudied. Six studies examine how the popular marketing tactic of anthropomorphization influences (a) consumers' favorability towards wearable tracking devices, (b) their health motivation, and (c) their health behavior (number of steps taken) over time. The authors uncover a novel dynamic effect of anthropomorphism, such that with use, the initially positive evaluations of anthropomorphized (vs. non-anthropomorphized) devices decrease, and (contrary to prior literature), anthropomorphized devices are not favored. Importantly, health motivation and health behaviors are also reduced over time with the use of an anthropomorphized (vs. non-anthropomorphized) wearable device. This decrease occurs because anthropomorphized devices reduce the wearers' perceived autonomy, which in turn, reduces their health motivation and health behavior. However, customizing the anthropomorphized device (by setting a customized goal or by monitoring a greater number of health-related indicators) can mitigate its negative effects. These findings provide novel insights to marketing scholars and managers, by suggesting that anthropomorphism can be a successful short-term selling strategy, but over time, it can have unintended consequences for both firms and consumers.