

Topics for the Master seminar – summer term 2025

General information

- Below you will find an **overview of topics** from which you can select your preferred topics for your Bachelor seminar.
- Please select at least four topics and prioritize them (→ indicate topic number and title) in your CV together with the usual information.
- We will do our best to consider your prioritizations as much as possible.
- Students who have indicated our chair as priority 1 will be given preference in the allocation of topics.
- **The specific design of the topic will be discussed in the individual meetings with your supervisor.**
- The papers should preferably be written in English – writing in German is also possible.

Topics for the Master seminar

1. Unveiling Ethical Dilemmas: Nudges in Digital Marketing and E-commerce

This seminar paper takes a critical look at the ethical dimensions of the use of nudges in digital marketing and e-commerce. It examines the potential ethical issues and dilemmas that arise when nudges are used to influence online consumer behavior and how these issues can be addressed (e.g. nudge plus). Through an analysis of the ethical framework, the research aims to identify and analyze the ethical considerations related to the implementation of nudges in these areas. It addresses issues of autonomy, transparency and the manipulation of consumer decisions and highlights the limitations and responsibilities of marketers when using nudges.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

2. Shaping Choices: Assessing the Impact of Sustainability Campaigns on Consumer Behavior

This seminar paper examines how sustainability campaigns influence consumer behavior, with a focus on their effectiveness in promoting environmentally conscious actions and purchasing decisions. By integrating insights from consumer psychology, behavioral economics and sustainability marketing, the key elements that make such campaigns successful are examined. The results will provide actionable insights for companies and organizations looking to design effective sustainability campaigns that not only resonate with consumers, but also inspire them to behave in environmentally friendly ways, contributing to broader environmental goals.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

3. Strategic use of social media in non-profit organizations: A comprehensive analysis

This seminar paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of the social media strategies used by non-profit organizations. Based on a comprehensive literature review from the fields of marketing and communications, the paper will analyze the diverse use of social media in the non-profit sector. It will examine how these organizations strategically use social media platforms and influencers to raise awareness, engage stakeholders, mobilize support, and advance their missions. By analyzing relevant studies, this study seeks to uncover key factors that contribute to effective social media strategies for nonprofits. The insights gained from this study can serve as valuable guidance for nonprofit organizations looking to optimize their social media presence and increase their impact in the digital landscape.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

4. The Role of Trade Promotions in Shaping Market Dynamics and Competition

You will systematically review the literature on how trade promotions (B2B promotions by manufacturers for retailers) influence manufacturer strategies, retailer competition, and consumer outcomes. The focus will be on understanding the strategic use of promotions in driving demand and competitive behavior among retailers across various market settings.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

5. Do Loyalty Programs Allow Firms to charge Higher Prices?

This seminar paper explores how loyalty programs enhance firms' pricing power by reviewing existing literature in detail. It examines the ways in which these programs influence consumer behavior, fostering stronger brand loyalty and reducing price sensitivity. Furthermore, the paper uncovers the key mechanisms through which loyalty programs contribute to a firm's ability to command higher prices and maintain competitive advantage.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

6. The Power of Negative Reviews on Consumer Purchase Decisions

This seminar paper delves into the impact of negative product reviews on consumer purchase intentions. Based on a comprehensive literature review, it investigates how different types of negative reviews shape perceptions, influence trust, and ultimately alter buying behavior. The research aims to uncover the mechanisms behind the persuasive power of criticism in shaping consumer choices.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

7. Information Overload in Consumer Decision-Making

This paper examines the impact of information overload on consumer behavior and identifies strategies to manage it. Through a comprehensive literature review, it highlights the challenges consumers face when overwhelmed with choices, such as decision paralysis and reliance on simplification strategies. The research further explores mechanisms behind these phenomena and approaches to mitigate information overload, enhancing consumer decision-making processes.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

8. Trends in Social Media Engagement Research

Content on social media is very diverse, comprising texts, images, videos, livestreams, stories, and many other types. Unsurprisingly, researchers employ various methods and tools to investigate social media engagement (e.g., likes, comments) drivers. The goal of this study is to consolidate recent advancements in this research area, for example regarding text or image analysis methods or the potential of large language models in this context (systematic literature review).

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

9. A Voice and Music Analytics Toolbox for Marketing Insights

Research has established numerous text and image characteristics that drive engagement. However, less is known about the audio layer of social media content. This is surprising considering that many, perhaps even most, social media posts contain voices or music (e.g., on TikTok), that some formats consist primarily (e.g., Podcasts) or to a large degree of human voice elements (e.g., livestreams) and that the rise of AI it made it much easier to manipulate voices and to generate music. All of this raises the question how marketing research can leverage voice and music analytics to study consumer behavior. The goal of this thesis/seminar is therefore to review the literature on how voice and music

analytics have been used in the past and to derive a state-of-the-art toolbox that informs future research and business practice in terms of which insights can be gained through specific methods.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

10. An Image and Video Analytics Toolbox for Marketing Insights

From product pictures to YouTube thumbnails and Instagram posts, media objects are omnipresent in the digital age. Beyond their primary purposes (e.g., displaying a product), these objects communicate a lot of information. For example, they use various colors, display human faces or emotions, contain written text, or blurred areas. But how does marketing research leverage this type of content and what are the pros and cons of the different approaches? The goal of this thesis/seminar is to review the marketing literature and to derive a state-of-the-art toolbox on how studies extract information from media objects.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

11. A Text Analytics Toolbox for Marketing Insights

Consumers write online reviews to express their opinion about a product, influencers disseminate Instagram posts with detailed captions to enhance engagement and companies carefully craft the messages they display on their website. These are just a few examples of text resources that can provide very valuable marketing insights. But how can these be leveraged exactly? The goal of this thesis/seminar is to review the literature on text analytics in marketing contexts and to derive a state-of-the-art toolbox that informs future research and business practice in terms of which insights can be gained through specific methods.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

12. Artificially authentic? – Virtual Influencer Marketing

Artificial characters such as LilMiquela or Noonooori gained large followings on social media. Moreover, companies increasingly cooperate with this new type of influencer, putting pressure on real (i.e., human) influencers. A systematic literature review will be conducted on this topic with a particular focus on differences between influencer types (e.g., human-like vs. anime-like virtual influencers or virtual vs human influencers).

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**

- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

13. Theories in mood and emotion research

Discovering how mood and emotions influence consumer behavior can unlock new opportunities for more effective marketing strategies. This paper aims to explore theories of mood and emotions research, along with current applications in online marketing. Conducting a structured literature review, this study will delve into how these theories explain their influence on consumer behavior. It will discuss the implications of these theories for marketing strategies, including online advertising and website design. The goal is to provide an understanding of how mood and emotions impact consumer decision-making and to explore practical applications for marketers.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

14. The Role of Social Proof in E-Commerce: Mechanisms, Effectiveness, and Ethical Implications

Social proof is a powerful tool in E-Commerce, leveraging customer reviews, ratings, and "bestseller" labels to influence consumer decisions by building trust and reducing perceived risk. This seminar will conduct a structured literature review and examine the role of social proof in consumer behavior and propose best practices for its responsible use in E-Commerce (e.g. explore emerging trends like AI-generated reviews and influencer marketing).

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

15. New Accessibility Guidelines and Website Quality Frameworks

This thesis examines how the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 align with existing website quality frameworks, such as ISO 25010, SiteQual and WebQual. While these frameworks address dimensions like usability, trust, and performance, accessibility often remains underrepresented. With WCAG 2.2 setting global standards for web accessibility and new regulations making compliance mandatory for large E-Commerce sites, integrating accessibility into quality frameworks is more critical than ever. This research aims to compare WCAG 2.2 with established frameworks, highlighting gaps and proposing a unified model that ensures legal compliance while enhancing inclusivity and user experience.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

16. Exploring the Dynamics of B2B Marketing

This review of B2B marketing literature examines scholarly articles to develop a thorough understanding of how companies interact with and market to other businesses effectively. By critically analyzing existing research, this structured review highlights key theories, emerging trends, proven strategies, as well as current challenges and risks within the B2B marketing landscape. This body of knowledge not only enhances academic insights but also provides a foundation for future research and identifies gaps in the current literature.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

17. Sustainability marketing fundamentals - A theoretical perspective

Scientific theories (such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour) are the backbone of many scientific articles. Knowing and understanding them is therefore an important basis for categorizing and advancing science. The aim of this systematic literature review is therefore to identify and illuminate the most important theories and models in the field of sustainability marketing and thereby gain a basic understanding of research in this area. This review provides orientation and a basis for future research.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**

18. Shedding Light on B2B Sustainability: What Does It Truly Mean?

With growing pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices, understanding how B2B companies address and communicate sustainability has become crucial. This paper focuses on systematically reviewing and comparing existing research on sustainability in B2B marketing through the lens of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria. By highlighting differences and similarities across these dimensions, the study aims to uncover current trends, successful strategies, and research gaps within the sustainability efforts of B2B companies.

- Literature review: **yes**
- Development of a conceptual framework: **no**
- Development of a study set-up (without testing): **no**
- Empirical testing (data collection & analysis): **no**