

Course Syllabus

Marketing Research Seminar

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Information

Aims, contents, and method of the course

This seminar is part of the Major in Marketing and International Marketing. Participants will work on emerging topics in marketing or marketing-related domains.

This seminar has several learning goals:

- Familiarize students with emerging topics within the broader field of marketing.
- Improve students' understanding of scientific work and increase their ability to synthesize relevant findings.
- Increase students' analytical skills and their ability to link conceptual / theoretical knowledge to practical implications.
- Improve students' academic writing skills, as well as their communications and presentation skills.

This course is targeted at students of the Major Marketing and International Marketing. Successful completion of the Marktforschung 2 or International Marketing Research 2 is required. The seminar is limited to a maximum of 24 participants and will be held in English.

Participants will be assigned to groups of three and will work on a pre-defined topic or research question (students' preferences will be taken into consideration whenever possible). Each group will receive a few references, which will serve as a starting point for the investigation. The groups will need to identify and critically discuss all the relevant literature. We also appreciate when the investigation is enriched with additional data (these might include analyses of industry practices, expert interviews, case studies, analysis of available secondary data, etc.). We expect participants to develop new research insights and highlight also relevant research opportunities.

Due to the present Covid situation, the first class will be held online. On the 6th (11:45 – 15:15) and 7th April (15:00 – 19:00), each team will be asked to briefly present their research question (15 minutes presentation) using an online format, which will be followed by a 15 minutes discussion. The final presentations will take place on June 1st and 2nd. Please find a preliminary schedule below:

Schedule

Topic	Date	Time
Opening seminar Introduction to the topics	March 15	9:45 – 12:00
Presentation of the research question	April 6	11:45 – 15:45
	April 7	15:00 – 19:00
Final presentations	June 1	To be announced
	June 2	

Assessment and permitted materials

The final grade consists of three components.

Class participation 10%
Group presentation 40%
Final report 50%

Minimum requirements and assessment criteria

Students achieving less than 50% will fail the course and need to re-take the course. Attendance in the first class is required. Class attendance is expected throughout the seminar.

If the circumstances in terms of (Covid-19) require it, the course will be offered in a digital format. In that case, the requirements and assessment criteria will not change.

Seminar Paper

The seminar paper should not exceed 20 pages of text, Times New Roman, Font 12, 1.5 line spacing. The reference list is not included in this page count. You can move less important information to an Appendix (there is no space limit for the Appendix). Please organize your manuscript (for example, the headings) based on the *Journal of Marketing Research* formatting guidelines (see under “Manuscript Organization“)
<https://www.ama.org/submission-guidelines-journal-of-marketing-research/>.

Task. Teams of three will work on a specific topic that will be assigned to your team. The topics are briefly described below along with some inspiration for potential research questions. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the focal literature and are encouraged to identify interesting research questions in the said domain. The research questions can be answered by a thorough critical analysis and discussion of the literature (and particularly the empirical literature). Based on your literature review, and possibly an analysis of secondary data, you might also derive propositions that could be tested in future research projects. Moreover, you could also think about suggesting a conceptual framework that summarizes your findings (you are encouraged to use figures, graphs, etc.). Thus, the basis for your seminar paper will, in most cases, be the existing academic literature.

However, some topics are simply so new that they have not received sufficient attention from academic scholars. Accordingly, the discourse on very new phenomena often does not take place in academic outlets but rather in non-academic outlets (newspapers, online magazines, or on blogs). You are encouraged to integrate these outlets in your analyses. Therefore, you should not restrict your literature search to academic articles or conference proceedings only (you might also consider press articles from magazines such as *The Economist*, *Wired Magazine*, *Harvard Business Review* to newspapers such as *The New York Times* or *The Guardian*).

Furthermore, you might derive new insights by analyzing the behavior of firms—you might identify companies that implement entirely new tactics or strategies. For example, in the context of transparency, the clothing manufacturer Everlane discloses, for each fashion product it markets, the cost components (cost of labor, raw materials, etc.). Identifying these examples (short cases studies) can also provide novel insights and enrich your work. You could also consider enhancing your paper with an analysis of secondary data (in many cases, data/statistics are accessible to the public) or by conducting some expert interviews. Or you could do a content analysis to demonstrate how prevalent a specific phenomenon is. For example, in the context of customization, many companies allow customers to return their customized products. One could sample manufacturers in different industries and code whether or not they allow their customers to have their customized products returned or not. This is just an illustrative example, but it gives you an indication of what is possible in the context of a seminar paper. Creativity is strongly appreciated.

Introduction. In the introduction of your paper, you should discuss why your research question is important, and who might benefit from reading the paper. You should clearly articulate the goal of your paper and how your new insights help contribute to the existing body of literature. The research should also have implications for decision-makers, which in most cases are managers (but can also be policymakers or consumers). Your paper should have an abstract, introduction, main body, and discussion section.

Many introductions start with what we know about a topic, what we do not know (the gap), and why it is important to fill this gap. Other introductions start with introducing a particular strategy pursued by a company and the goal here is to understand what the consequences or antecedents of this phenomenon are. To marketers, it is often important to understand *whether* a certain strategy is effective or not (the main effect), *why* it is effective (the mediation effect; for example, understanding the psychological process behind the effect), and *when* it is effective or not (the moderation effect or boundary condition of an effect).

Please note that you will be evaluated based on your research paper's originality, quality, and interestingness. Merely repeating what has been established before is not sufficient (for example, just repeating the content of an existing literature review). Please make sure that you correctly cite the literature. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and we commonly use plagiarism software to ensure the quality of the papers. For more information on plagiarism see the APA plagiarism guidelines: <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/avoiding-plagiarism.pdf>

Resources. Below please find some resources that will help you to craft your paper. Please make sure to carefully read the documents. The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) offers a great website that contains information on how to craft research papers. I strongly encourage you to visit the website—the information on this website will help you to organize your research paper. <https://uwc.ucla.edu/resources/handouts-for-students/>

Writing your introduction. The following paper might help you to better craft the introduction of the paper and flesh out why your research is interesting.

Grant, A. M., & Pollock, T. G. (2011). From the editors—Publishing in AMJ—Part 3: Setting the hook [Editorial]. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5), 873-79. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.4000>

Literature analysis. You will most likely synthesize the existing literature. Please note that literature reviews should not only repeat what has been found in previous articles, but you should also try to discuss and analyze the paper (and set it into context). The analyses of the literature might help you to support your arguments and answer your research questions. Please use the (online) resources of the library. Databases such as EBSCO will be of help. Moreover, you can also search for literature on google.scholar.com. Please also note that there are big differences in terms of quality of the academic journals. Papers published in high-quality journals are more credible than that of lower-level journals. Below please find examples on how to craft a literature review and an overview of quality journals.

Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for *Psychological Bulletin*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(2), 172.

<https://www.mcgill.ca/connections-lab/files/connections-lab/writing-a-review-paper-for-psychological-bulletin.pdf>

<https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/PSYCH202B-2.1.2-Writing-a-psychology-literature-review.pdf>

https://psych.uw.edu/storage/writing_center/litrev.pdf

<https://psychology.ucsd.edu/files/undergrad/writing-research-papers-in-a-pastyle-guide.pdf>

<https://vhbonline.org/vhb4you/vhb-jourqual> <https://vhbonline.org/vhb4you/vhb-jourqual/vhb-jourqual-3>

Structured literature search. Depending on your research question, you might also consider conducting a comprehensive literature survey. In this case, I encourage you to visit the PRISMA website (<http://www.prisma-statement.org/>), which provides several important recommendations for analyzing previous literature. This might help you to make sure that you cover all important articles that have been published in this area.

<https://www.mcgill.ca/connections-lab/files/connections-lab/writing-a-review-paper-for-psychological-bulletin.pdf>

<https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n160>

Writing Style. Writing is not easy. However, writing is a craft that you can learn it. The following papers will help you to improve your writing style accordingly. In particular, I encourage you to read the front end of Joseph Williams (1990) classic book on writing, which will help you improve your writing substantially.

Williams, Joseph M. Style (1990). *Toward clarity and grace* (Chicago guides to writing, editing, and publishing).
<https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2014/07/WilliamsJosephM1990StyleTowardClarityandGrace.pdf>

Warren, N. L., Farmer, M., Gu, T., and Warren, C. (2021). Marketing ideas: How to write research articles that readers understand and cite. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(5), 42-57.
https://www.matthewgfarmer.com/uploads/1/3/8/3/138354195/warren_farmer_gu_warren_2021_-_marketing_ideas_paper_published_in_jm_1.pdf

Research Presentation

You are supposed to present your seminar paper using a power-point presentation. Each group member is expected to present. The presentation will be followed by a discussion of the presentation's content. Details concerning the length of presentations and a presentation schedule will be provided later.

Topics

Mass customization (up to 2 projects)

Mass customization has been changing the marketing landscape. Firms in various industries increasingly rely on customization tools (toolkits) that allow customers to self-design their products. In this project, students are expected to provide novel insights on customization. First, it would be important to synthesize the literature and provide an overview of the state-of-the-art. Second, could analyze new customization trends in the field. In this seminar paper, students could provide an overview of when customization might be beneficial and when not. It should also equip marketers with do's and don'ts when it comes to the use of customization (i.e., develop best practices). You could also analyze new challenges in the field of customization (e.g., linking 3D printing to customization).

Exemplary Literature

de Bellis, E., Hildebrand, C., Ito, K., Herrmann, A., & Schmitt, B. (2019). Personalizing the customization experience: a matching theory of mass customization interfaces and cultural information processing. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 56(6), 1050-1065.

Franke, N., Schreier, M., & Kaiser, U. (2010). The "I designed it myself" effect in mass customization. *Management Science*, 56(1), 125-140.

Salvador, F., De Holan, P. M., & Piller, F. (2009). Cracking the code of mass customization. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 50(3), 71-78.

Schlager, T., Hildebrand, C., Häubl, G., Franke, N., & Herrmann, A. (2018). Social product-customization systems: Peer input, conformity, and consumers' evaluation of customized products. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 35(1), 319-349.

Crowdfunding (up to 2 projects)

Crowdfunding is a recent phenomenon that has received attention from scholars in finance, management, and marketing. In this project, you could provide an overview of state-of-the-art research on crowdfunding. The focus should be on empirical research but also on recent developments. You could try to identify interesting research questions within the area of crowdfunding. Perhaps the most compelling one is to investigate when firms should use crowdfunding and when not. The authors might also investigate antecedents of crowdfunding and consequences to various stakeholders. Ideally, the authors could come up with a conceptual framework that could be used by policy makers or managers.

Exemplary Literature

Acar, O. A., Dahl, D. W., Fuchs, C., & Schreier, M. (2021). The signal value of crowdfunded products. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58(4), 644-661.

Agrawal, A., Catalini, C., & Goldfarb, A. (2014). Some simple economics of crowdfunding. *Innovation Policy and the Economy*, 14(1), 63-97.

Belleflamme, P., Lambert, T., & Schwienbacher, A. (2014). Crowdfunding: Tapping the right crowd. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29(5), 585-609.

Mollick, E. (2014). The dynamics of crowdfunding: An exploratory study. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29(1), 1-16.

Transparency

Companies increasingly make the costs associated with their product offerings transparent. The US clothing manufacturer Everlane, for example, discloses cost information associated with each production step. This development is also consistent with the EU-wide Supply Chain Law ("Lieferkettengesetz"), which holds companies accountable for human-right violations along their supply chain. Accordingly, more and more companies have started to make the supply chain transparent and disclose this information to investors and consumers. In this project, you could give policymakers, companies, or consumers a better understanding of the theoretical and practical implications of introducing transparency. Transparency is also discussed in areas outside of marketing, including accounting, operations management, and finance. It is possible that you are able to identify links between these domains. In addition to analyzing the academic literature, you can also employ secondary data on transparency and provide examples for the use of transparency in today's business. For example, what companies are doing to ensure transparency.

Exemplary Literature

Buell, R. W., Kim, T., & Tsay, C. J. (2017). Creating reciprocal value through operational transparency. *Management Science*, 63(6), 1673-1695.

Buell, R. W. (2019). Operational transparency. *Make Your Processes Visible to Customers and Your Customers Visible to Employees*.

Mohan, B., Buell, R. W., & John, L. K. (2020). Lifting the veil: The benefits of cost transparency. *Marketing Science*, 39(6), 1105-1121.

Sodhi, M. S., & Tang, C. S. (2019). Research opportunities in supply chain transparency. *Production and Operations Management*, 28(12), 2946-2959.

The rise of the platform economy

Digitalization has changed the landscape of business. More and more companies create platforms that enable buyers and sellers to interact. Examples are Amazon, Etsy, Uber, Google, among others. In this project, you could analyze the impact of this development on sellers and buyers. What are the challenges? What are the threats? When is a platform model appropriate and when not? How can firms design effective platforms?

Exemplary Literature

Bonina, C., Koskinen, K., Eaton, B., & Gawer, A. (2021). Digital platforms for development: Foundations and research agenda. *Information Systems Journal*, 31(6), 869-902.

Kenney, M., & Zysman, J. (2016). The rise of the platform economy. *Issues in science and technology*, 32(3), 61.

Eckhardt, G. M., Houston, M. B., Jiang, B., Lamberton, C., Rindfleisch, A., & Zervas, G. (2019). Marketing in the sharing economy. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 5-27.

Wichmann, J. R., Wiegand, N., & Reinartz, W. J. (2022). The Platformization of Brands. *Journal of Marketing*, 86(1), 109-131.

The role of Artificial Intelligence

In many domains, humans are replaced by artificial intelligence for a wide range of tasks. Since human-decision making has limitations and are fraught with biases, companies have started to increasingly rely on algorithms. Nevertheless, there are also shortcomings of algorithmic-based decision-making. In this project, you could analyze contexts where the use of algorithmic decisions provides benefits. For example, for what kind of tasks are algorithmic management superior – and why is this the case? More broadly, we are also interested in understanding when human intelligence can make better decisions than artificial intelligence. It is also possible to analyze what kind of jobs can be replaced by artificial intelligence and what kind of jobs cannot.

Exemplary Literature

Granulo, A., Fuchs, C., & Puntoni, S. (2019). Psychological reactions to human versus robotic job replacement. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3(10), 1062-1069.

Huang, Ming-Hui, and Roland T. Rust. "Artificial intelligence in service." *Journal of Service Research* 21.2 (2018): 155-172.

Puntoni, S., Reczek, R. W., Giesler, M., & Botti, S. (2021). Consumers and artificial intelligence: An experiential perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(1), 131-151.

Verma, Sanjeev, Rohit Sharma, Subhamay Deb, and Debojit Maitra, (2001), "Artificial intelligence in marketing: Systematic review and future research direction." *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights* 1, no. 1.