

**Themenliste für Master- und Bachelor-Arbeiten:
Wintersemester 2025/26
(Professur für BWL, insbesondere Markt- und Konsumverhalten)**

Themen für Bachelor- oder Masterarbeiten sind entlang der Themencluster Sensorisches Marketing, Digitalisierung sowie (soziale & ökologische) Nachhaltigkeit strukturiert. Die jeweiligen Kurzbeschreibungen geben eine grundlegende Orientierung und dienen der Beschreibung des groben Themas, welches zu bearbeiten ist. Die konkrete Frage innerhalb des gewählten Themenbereichs legen Sie selbst in Absprache mit Ihrer Betreuerin fest. Die Themenfelder entspringen hauptsächlich dem neu eingerichteten Lehrstuhl für BWL, insbesondere Markt- und Konsumverhalten. Themen aus dem Bereich Dienstleistungsmanagement werden weiterhin angeboten und sind ebenfalls in der Liste enthalten.

Die Arbeiten können sowohl auf deutscher als auch englischer Sprache verfasst werden (im Einklang mit Ihrer jeweiligen Prüfungsordnung).

Themenliste

#	Topic	Type	Contact
Topic cluster "sustainability"			
1	<p>How do consumers perceive brands that promote socially inclusive working environments?</p> <p>Given the challenge of creating socially inclusive working environments (e.g., working environments that promote the inclusion of employees with multiple employment hurdles such as psychological problems, language problems, criminal history), the aim of this thesis is to explore whether and how companies that foster such socially-inclusive working environments can benefit from communicating their efforts to consumers. This is particularly intriguing as consumer responses are not necessarily self-evident. For example, would consumers react positively or negatively to products manufactured by companies that employ individuals with multiple employment hurdles? Would consumers either display a higher willingness to pay for products of socially-inclusive employer brands or would they rather have concerns regarding product quality?</p>	Emp.	Monika Imschloß
2	<p>Nudging for the environment</p> <p>The concept of nudging has been introduced by Thaler and Sunstein in 2008. So-called nudges are choice architecture interventions to alter behavior towards a desired outcome.</p>	Emp.	Monika Imschloß



	<p>Therefore, nudging can be used to promote sustainable consumer behavior. Some examples of nudges are the use of default options or social norms. Companies need to understand when and how they can use these interventions to promote sustainable consumer behavior.</p> <p>Questions can cover e.g. different types of nudges or different domains of sustainable consumer behavior (e.g., sufficiency, circular economy or sharing economy etc.).</p>		
3	<p>Second-hand products/business-models</p> <p>In order to save resources, second-hand approaches are of growing importance. Topics in this domain can address, for example, whether the value of a second-hand product depends on characteristics of the pre-owner (e.g., a second-hand product is valued more if it was pre-owned by an intelligent/attractive/sympathetic pre-owner) or how to best promote second-hand approaches (e.g., the outdoor retailer Globetrotter has a specific second-hand section in some of its stores).</p>	Emp.	Monika Imschloß
4	<p>Can influencers promote sustainability?</p> <p>Influencer marketing is on the rise. Accordingly, companies have to understand whether, when, and how they can use influencers to promote sustainable products or even sustainable behaviors among consumers. Questions to explore are completely open and can cover e.g., aspects of influencer authenticity, influencer language style, influencer familiarity etc.</p>	Emp.	Monika Imschloß
5	<p>Sustainability as a status symbol: How green consumption shapes social perception</p> <p>Sustainable consumption may not only reflect personal values but also serve as a form of social signaling. This thesis could explore how sustainable behavior is perceived by others – for instance, in terms of status, credibility, or authenticity. Questions may also include: Do certain sustainable actions stand out more than others? Are “green consumers” evaluated positively or critically by peers?</p>	Emp.	Nora Wolfeil
6	<p>Nudging without backlash? Designing sustainable interventions for skeptical consumers</p>	Emp.	Nora Wolfeil



	Nudges can be powerful – but not all consumers react positively to being “nudged.” This thesis could explore how behavioral interventions aimed at promoting sustainable choices are perceived by consumers with low environmental concern. Key questions may include: What types of nudges trigger reactance? How can nudges be framed to reduce resistance and increase acceptance among non-green target groups?		
7	The impact of climate-related events on sustainable consumption Climate-related crises – such as floods, droughts, or wildfires – may influence how people think about sustainability. This thesis could investigate whether and how such events affect consumer attitudes and behaviors. Possible directions include media effects, emotional responses, or affected regions/individuals.	Emp.	Nora Wolfeil
8	Emotional drivers of sustainable behavior: The role of inspiration Many consumers report that sustainability feels important, but not always actionable. This thesis could explore how inspiration can shape sustainable consumption. Questions may include: What kind of messages or narratives inspire action? How do emotional vs. factual appeals differ in their effect on sustainable behavior and choices? How can frontline employees inspire sustainable consumption choices?	Emp.	Nora Wolfeil
Topic cluster “digitalization”			
9	Generative AI in marketing – value creation for customers Given the increasing prominence of generative AI in marketing activities, the aim of this thesis is to explore whether and how generative AI can help to create value for customers (e.g., convenience, inspiration).	Emp. / Concept.	Monika Imschloß
10	Generative AI & human decision making Given the increasing use of generative AI by consumers, the aim of this thesis is to explore how generative AI impacts human decision making. For example, does reliance on	Emp.	Monika Imschloß



	generative AI for accomplishing a task prevent feelings of pride for one's work? These are just exemplary questions and you are free to come up with own idea.		
11	Generative AI & market research Given the increasing use of generative AI for synthetic sampling (i.e., generative AI based samples that mimic human participants), the aim of this thesis is to explore to what extent generative AI can predict human decision making. For example, can generated data be used for market research and forecasting consumer behavior trends? Do silicon samples "perceive" sensory stimuli similar as human samples do (e.g., would GPT rate a picture of an intensively colored orange juice as higher on sweetness expectations than a picture of a less intensively colored orange juice?).	Emp.	Monika Imschloß
12	How do AI influencers affect consumer behavior? Given the rise of AI influencers, it is interesting to explore whether, how, and when AI influencers affect consumer behavior. Would, for example, an AI influencer that promotes products via sensory descriptions be seen as less authentic than an AI influencer that promotes products via functional attributes? This is just an example, the precise topic can be chosen freely.	Emp.	Monika Imschloß
13	Use of Multi-Agent Systems in marketing and marketing research Given the growing complexity of consumer behavior and the increasing availability of behavioral data, this thesis explores the use of Multi-Agent Systems (MAS) as a tool in both marketing strategy development and marketing research. On the one hand, the thesis can examine to what extent MAS can simulate and forecast market dynamics. Key questions include: How do trends spread among consumer agents, and what role do specific actors (e.g., influencers, early adopters) play? To what extent can MAS capture the impact of word-of-mouth dynamics and social networks on product diffusion? How do external shocks (e.g., scandals, sudden trend shifts, economic disruptions) affect consumer behavior within these simulated markets? By simulating	Emp./ Theo.	Lara Berger



	<p>scenarios, the aim is to evaluate the predictive power and strategic relevance of MAS for modern marketing research. On the other hand, MAS can be used to model the behavior of agents in managerial roles, such as marketing leadership, brand managers, or media planners. These agents operate autonomously and collaboratively, simulating how marketing departments make resource allocation decisions, react to market feedback, and coordinate across different functions. The thesis can investigate how role-based agents (e.g., brand managers, media planners, pricing strategists) support decision-making in simulated marketing departments.</p>		
14	<p>Chatbots and consumer behavior</p> <p>As chatbots become increasingly integrated into digital marketing channels, this thesis investigates how they should be designed and how they should communicate to be perceived by consumers as helpful, trustworthy, and engaging. The focus lies on identifying the linguistic, visual, and behavioral features of chatbots that influence user acceptance and satisfaction in marketing contexts. What conversational tone (e.g., friendly, neutral, formal), personality traits (e.g., humorous, empathetic, informative) and design features make chatbots feel authentic and supportive and ultimately lead to user satisfaction?</p>	Emp.	Lara Berger
15	<p>LLM-based product recommendations</p> <p>With the growing use of large language models (LLMs) and conversational AI in commerce, examining the acceptance and effectiveness of product recommendations given by such systems (e.g., ChatGPT) becomes of importance. How do users respond to recommendations delivered via chatbot interfaces and LLMs compared to traditional recommendation engines? What emotional or cognitive triggers increase or decrease acceptance? The goal of this thesis is to identify actionable insights for designing recommendation strategies within LLMs that enhance the customer experience and improve their acceptance.</p>	Emp.	Lara Berger
16	<p>Design of Multi-Agent Systems</p> <p>What are the design factors for successful implementation of multi-agent systems? How to embed multi-agent systems as viable colleagues in organizational workflows? Questions</p>	Emp.	tba



	like these should be explored in the scope of the thesis. We are open to your own focus and thus leave the topic quite open. Investigations can address the role of task-specific characteristics, of team characteristics, of process characteristics etc.		
17	AI field studies/experiments You have access to a company that allows for AI field studies/experiments? For example, testing personalized genAI created Ads or testing AI created green nudges in online retail? Or: testing the effectiveness of multi-agent systems or customer-AI interactions? Whatever it is – we are happy to discuss this topic with you and make a joint decision on whether your research endeavour and our research interests align. Please reach out sufficiently in advance to the registration deadline!		tbd
Themenbereiche des Lehrstuhls Dienstleistungsmanagement			
18	Topic cluster “Servitization” The development of the service business at Company XY – a case study <u>Description (just an orientation):</u> (Digital) servitization, or service infusion, refers to the transformation of a product provider into a solution provider, often including the offering of smart services. Numerous manufacturing companies are pursuing this strategy to counteract the commoditization of their products and achieve higher profit margins. Despite the clear advantages of servitization, studies have shown that the majority of companies are still in early stages of servitization. The purpose of this thesis will be to critically examine the servitization endeavors of a manufacturing company that you have access to by conducting a qualitative case study. Multiple case studies or expert interviews in multiple companies are also possible. The specific problem statement will be tailored to the situation in your company, e.g. what tensions have occurred, what role did different departments play, what kind of capabilities need to be developed, etc.	Empirical	Eva Lexutt
19	Topic cluster “Servitization” Conceptualizing, operationalizing, and measuring servitization	Conceptual	Eva Lexutt



	<p><u>Description (just an orientation):</u> Servitization, also known as service infusion, refers to the transformation of a product provider into a solution provider. Although there are numerous studies on servitization, there is no consensus in research on how to conceptualize, operationalize, and measure servitization. As part of the thesis, the different approaches to conceptualizing, operationalizing, and measuring servitization used in quantitative empirical studies will be analyzed, compared and critically discussed.</p>		
20	<p>Topic cluster "Gender" The significance of services for the formation and expression of gender identities.</p> <p><u>Description (just an orientation):</u> “According to feminist consumer research, gender identity is being negotiated and contested through everyday consumption practices” (siehe z.B. Butler 1988, 1990/2006). Previous research has mainly focused on the role of product consumption. This thesis will examine the significance of the use of services for the formulation of gender identity on the basis of a qualitative study. A focus can be placed on masculinity or femininity and on specific services.</p>	Empirical	Eva Lexutt
21	<p>Topic cluster "Sustainability" Social Practice Theories as an explanatory approach for sustainable consumer behavior in services</p> <p><u>Description (just an orientation):</u> Sustainable consumer behavior manifests itself, among other things, in more conscious consumption, in refraining from purchasing and using services that harm the environment or do not meet social and ethical standards, e.g., refraining from air travel or donating an amount equal to one's ecological footprint. In the literature on consumer behavior, it is often stated that consumers have a positive attitude toward such services but do not change their behavior (the so-called attitude-behavior gap). The Theory of Reasoned Action (and its various precursors and further developments) is often used as an explanatory approach for this. This thesis will explore whether social practice theories can also provide a corresponding explanation for why consumers do not exhibit sustainable consumer behavior. In addition,</p>	Theoretical	Eva Lexutt



	solutions for overcoming the attitude-behavior gap based on practice theories will be developed.		
22	<p>Service Management and Marketing</p> <p>How do service providers and customers jointly co-create service value?</p> <p><i>Description (by way of orientation):</i></p> <p>Services differ from products primarily in terms of a high degree of intangibility of the “final product” and the co-creative process from which the latter results. Potential research questions in this cluster refer to the theoretical foundations of managing the process of co-creation or addressing potential barriers to co-creation.</p>	Conceptual/ Empirical	Katharina Hauptmann
23	<p>(Environmentally) sustainable services</p> <p>How can service providers and customers (co-)create sustainable service value?</p> <p>Given the largely intangible nature of services, they have long been argued to be less harmful to the natural environment. Yet, given the urgency of climate change, service providers and customers alike will have to co-create services sustainably. Theses in this cluster will therefore focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the ability of sharing / P2P / C2C / access-over-ownership approaches to meet present needs without comprising future generations’ ability to meet their needs. b) Green marketing c) Identifying green washing d) Devising corporate sustainability strategies for service contexts 	Empirical/ Conceptual	Katharina Hauptmann
24	<p>(Environmentally) sustainable consumer behaviour</p> <p>How can consumers meet their consumption needs responsibly?</p> <p>Consumption patterns make up individuals’ largest contribution to (un)sustainable behaviour. This cluster thus focuses on identifying drivers of sustainable consumer behaviour. Speciate topics include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How does social identity shape sustainable consumer behaviour? b) How can service providers incentivise sustainable consumer behaviour? 	Empirical/ conceptual	Katharina Hauptmann